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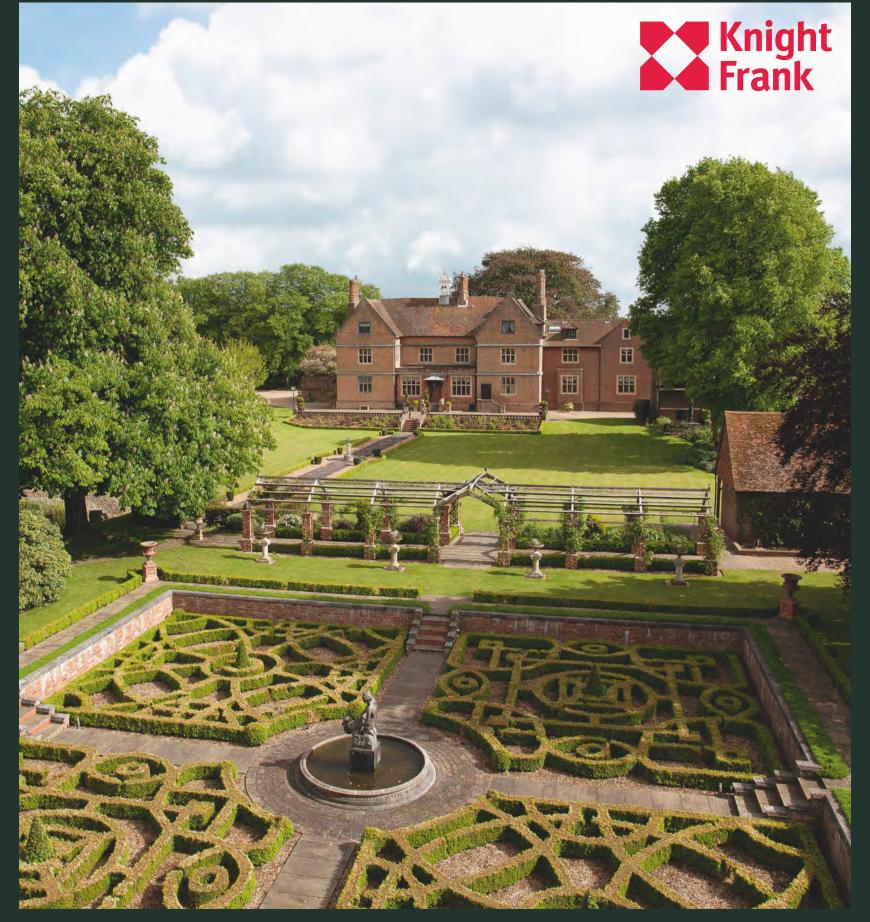
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#### 1775 – JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER – 1851

Eton, from the Slough Road

Pencil and watercolour:  $6 \frac{1}{8} \times 8 \frac{3}{4}$  in / 15.6 × 22.2 cm

Painted circa 1801-2

This is one of seven watercolours made for William Byrne's Britannia Depicta. The project was one of Turner's earliest forays into topographical print-making, a sphere in which he became the most successful artist of his generation. Byrne's idea was to create a series of illustrated volumes covering all the counties of Britain; Turner's view of the school adorned the volume on Berkshire. The focus is the soaring, fifteenth-century Eton College Chapel, the centrepiece of Henry VI's religious and educational foundation. On the right, two men fish in Colenorton Brook, a tributary of the Thames. The nearer figure on the bridge wears a red jacket of the kind known as a mess jacket, resembling the short coats that were formally adopted by the School in 1820. The light filtering through the tree recalls the poetic landscapes of Claude Lorrain, but also anticipates the naturalism of Turner's studies later in the 1800s.

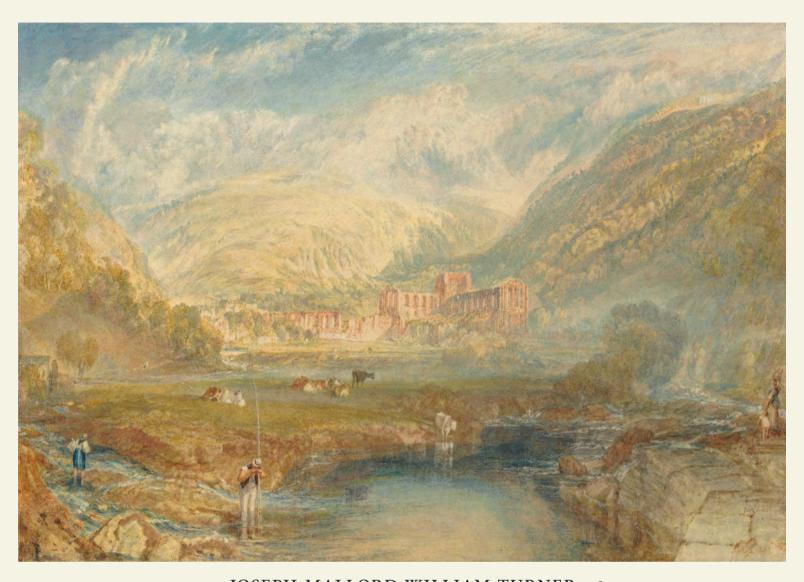
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#### RICHARD GREEN

FINE PAINTINGS • ESTABLISHED 1955



#### 1775 – JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER – 1851

#### Rievaulx Abbey, Yorkshire

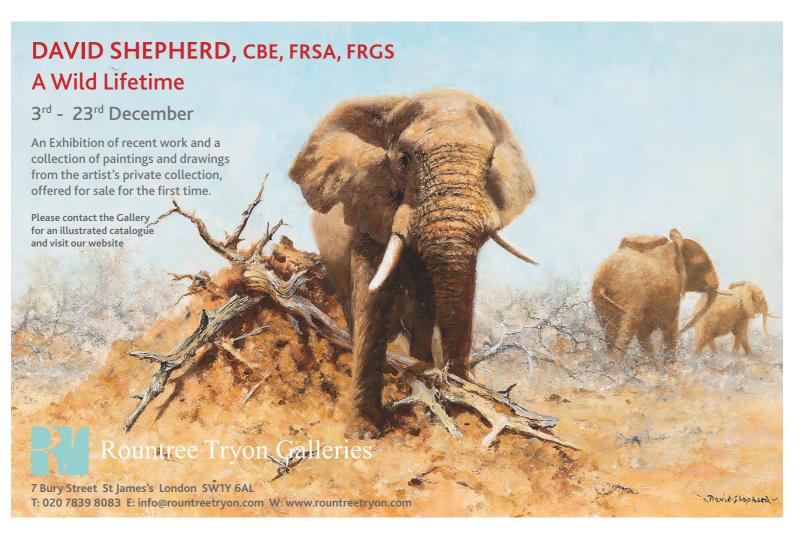
Watercolour over pencil, with scratching out on white Whatman paper dated 1824: 11  $\times$  15  $^{3}\!\!/_{4}$  in / 27.9  $\times$  40 cm

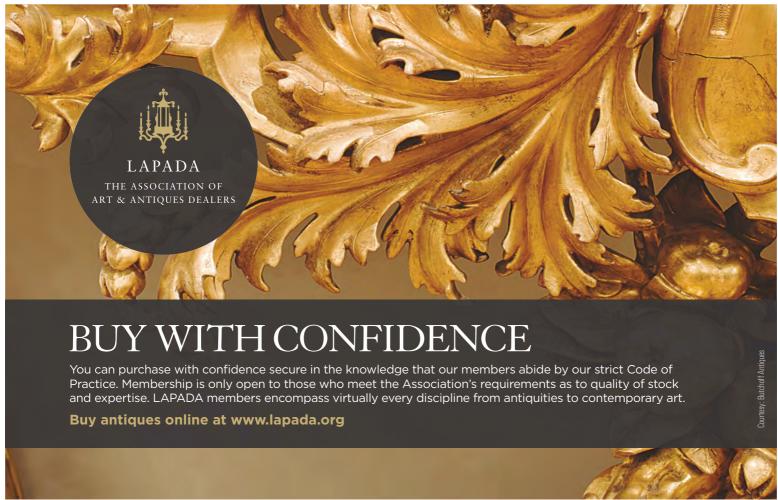
Painted *circa* 1824–5

Between 1824 and 1837 Turner painted almost a hundred watercolours of some of the most appealing sites in Britain – modern as well as historic – to be engraved for *Picturesque Views in England and Wales*. *Rievaulx Abbey* is among the very finest, and was in the first batch created for the series in the winter of 1824–5. Turner made the composition with reference to sketches from his visits to the abbey in 1801 and 1816. The twelfth-century Cistercian monks who built Rievaulx Abbey deliberately selected a remote location in the shelter of a valley running off the North York Moors. Rievaulx was the foremost Cistercian institution, with around 140 monks and 500 lay brothers. Turner evokes the decayed grandeur of the abbey and the drama of the natural setting, with its veils of atmosphere. The fisherman in the foreground alludes to one of his own most cherished means of relaxation.

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#### Briton Rivière RA, 1840-1920



To the Hills, 1901 oil on canvas 112 x 163 cms 44\% x 64\% ins

EXHIBITED: London, Royal Academy, 1901, no. 179.

Rivière was enormously popular with Victorian audiences for his anecdotal pictures of people with animals, usually dogs. He had a superb command of composition and paint technique and also painted historical subjects and portraits, but his animal scenes were far and away his most successful works. One of his most celebrated, *Sympathy* (c. 1878, Tate Britain), shows a small girl banished to 'the naughty step', comforted by the family dog.

In this somewhat less sentimental work, Rivière's eye for canine anatomy

and behaviour equally enhances a figure narrative. However, here, his approach to details and physiognomy is more subtle. The shepherd's action of turning the key in the door of his cottage (necessary only if he lived alone), and the contrast between his posture and the exuberant poses of his 'Shelties' express his remoteness and almost certain loneliness. But by giving most of his composition over to the three dogs and their actions, Rivière shifted the emphasis to their joy in their master and the outdoor freedom they alone share.



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BADA logo is displayed.

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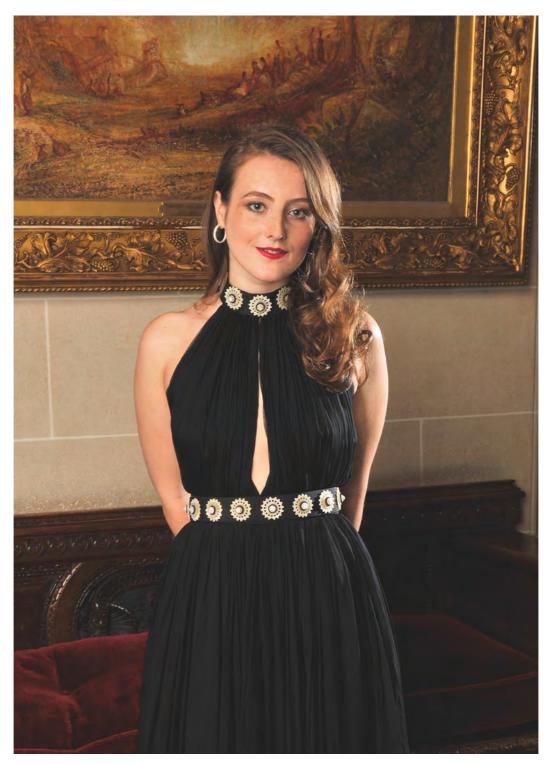


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# COUNTRY LIFE

VOL CCVIII NO 50, DECEMBER 10, 2014

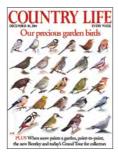


#### ${\it Miss Sophie Coleridge}$

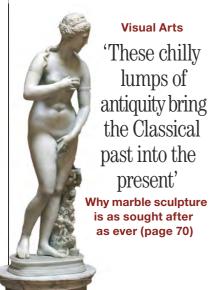
Sophie, aged 18, is the only daughter of Mr and Mrs Nicholas Coleridge of Wolverton Hall, Worcestershire. Educated at The Cheltenham Ladies' College, Sophie is studying History of Art and Italian at the University of Edinburgh.

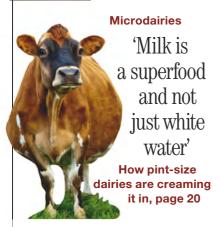
 $Photographed\ by\ Tim\ Griffiths\ at\ Le\ Bal\ des\ D\'ebutantes,\ Paris$ 

#### Contents December 10, 2014



Detail of bird poster, by Deryck Henley/Flights of Fancy







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The thrill of the chase: point-to-pointing at Laleston in Mid Glamorgan, Wales (page 58)

#### This week

#### 9 IU IQIDO F. HOODVIDARXUMSDIQMO

The conservationist and actress chooses a wildlife drawing that's also a fitting tribute to a friend

#### 3DUX & KXUFK 7 UHDXUHV

John Goodall focuses on a marble tomb at the Church of St Leonard in Apethorpe, Northamptonshire

#### Cover story 7 KH VKDSHDQHWRI VQRZ

Snow presents the opportunity to look at our gardens and surroundings with different eyes, writes Kirsty Fergusson

#### Cover story: KDWELLGVZ DOWRUEUHDNDW

With garden birds flocking to our bird tables, COUNTRY LIFE identifies the species you're most likely to see this winter and what they really want to eat

#### (ONVEHP DICLÁFHOFH

As an intensely used venue for diplomatic entertainment, Lancaster House, London SW1, can perhaps claim to be the capital's greatest public secret. John Goodall reports

#### Cover story ' D VRI P XGDQGP HUP HOW

The amateur sport of point-to-pointing holds true to its foundation in hunting, reflects the Corinthian spirit and offers a great family day out. Brian Armstrong reports

#### 6SHDNQJ YROXP HV

Think you know paper sculpture? Think again. Diana Woolf meets Su Blackwell, the artist working by the book

Cover story: KDWWTRRQV (JHTP VDHP DOHR! Steve Moody gets behind the wheel of the brawny Bentley Mulsanne Speed

#### (QQQI WAH) HURQDKII KQRWI

David Profumo reflects on a fishing trip to Cuba, a dry year for salmon and a last-minute reprieve on the River Tweed

#### \$ WAQDWRI WAQDWAY

This year, three historic almshouses celebrate the 400th anniversary of their founder's death. John Goodall investigates

#### Cover story, QSXUXIVRI J RGVDQGKHRHV

Today's collectors of Classical sculpture are following in the footsteps of the noblemen and connoisseurs who made the Grand Tour, explains Ruth Guilding

#### . LYMKHO\* DUCHO&RRN

Melanie Johnson bakes with apples from an English orchard

#### Every week

7RZQ &RXQW The rise of the microdairy

#### 1 RWERRN

All you need to know this week

#### / HWWW.V

\$ JURP HQHV

#### 0 \ : HN

Joe Gibbs mourns Campbells of Beauly

#### .07 KH\* DOHO

Ursula Cholmeley explains how she's reinvigorated a stretch of river

#### 3 URSHUWO DUNHW

Penny Churchill discovers you can get more for your money in Worcestershire

#### 3 URSHUW 1 HZ V

Arabella Youens finds homes in the winter sun on a budget of £1 million

#### \$ UWO DINHW

Huon Mallalieu ponders whether props can be film stars

#### ( | KIELWRO

Huon Mallalieu visits a Parisian museum of works by Monet

#### 3 HURUP LOJ \$ UW

Geoffrey Smith has merry music for all tastes

#### %RRNV

Murder they wrote: a round-up of the latest thrillers

#### **%UIGI HDQG&URVZ RUG**

&OWIÀHG\$ GYHUWHP HOW

#### 6SHFWWRU

Lucy Baring's to-do list: give up

7RWHUQI E \* HQWQ



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# The simple joy of our feathered friends

HERE are few more universal pleasures than watching birds feeding at a bird table. In this week's issue (page 44), we celebrate some of the species that visit our gardens at this time of year, glad to supplement their diet with nuts and scraps. Our pleasure in them echoes that of the ancient world, which imagined beautiful, wronged girls becoming swallows and nightingales and the king who preyed on them finding his comeuppance as a hoopoe. Myths humanised otherwise mysterious winged creatures, reflecting, perhaps, the sense of companionship that birds inspire rationally or not—in people near them. Mrs Throckmorton kept a bullfinch in the 18th century: we know this because William Cowper lamented the poor thing's death, eaten by a rat: 'His teeth were strong, the cage was wood.—/He left poor Bully's beak.'

Typically droll, Charles Dickens kept a pet raven called Grip, who bit his children's ankles. Alas, Grip died after eating too many chips of lead paint and can now be seen, stuffed, in the Free Library of Philadelphia: the children, having forgiven Grip his bad manners, persuaded Dickens to work him into his latest novel, *Barnaby Rudge*. Grip inspired Edgar Allan Poe, who thought he might have been given more prophetic powers, to write *The Raven*.

Bully and Grip, however loved, led restricted lives. And yet caged birds have been, from the earliest times, anathema to other writers. Pliny was against them, standing out against an age that did unspeakable things to both beasts and men (the actor Clodius Aesopus enjoyed eating birds that sang or talked, presumably to improve his own talent). By the medieval period, poets had the example of St Francis, who freed caged doves, as well as Boethius, in *The* 

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Consolation of Philosophy, to guide them. Chaucer seems particularly to have loved birds and promoted their freedom. Later, William Blake put the matter pithily in his famous couplet: 'A Robin Redbreast in a Cage/Puts all Heaven in a Rage.' Thomas Hardy penned an eloquent letter to *The Times* on the cruelty of forcing birds to 'drag out an unnatural life in a wired cell'.

Our sensitivity is heightened, perhaps, by the symbolism that human beings can hardly help imposing on avian life. The tradition is as old as the Bible, in which the Psalms portray doves as alternately sacrifice and protector (hence Henry James's choice of *The Wings of the Dove* as the title of one of his novels). Superstition, without Biblical authority, attributed a special quality to the cockerel, which Shakespeare incorporated into *Hamlet*, in which it is said, on Christmas Eve: 'The bird of dawning singeth all night long.'

Will you be awake to hear it? Or will you be happy to celebrate the season in company with the 'common or garden' birds that cheer our over-sophisticated existences with visits from the wild?

#### PPA Specialist Consumer Magazine of the Year 2014/15 British Society of Magazine Editors Innovation of the Year 2014/15

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# Pint-size dairies can cream it in

As the milk industry suffers, Tom Levitt reports on the rise of the microdairy

HE prevailing narrative of the milk industry is a depressing one. Supermarkets sell milk as a loss leader, consumers have become used to buying it as a cheap, basic product and, for dairy farmers, the margins can be frighteningly small. Their only solution, say industry experts, is to scale up: increase their herd size, cut costs and produce as much milk as they can, as efficiently as possible. For smaller, familysized farms, with little capital to expand, this inevitably means an exit from dairying.

Tragically, in a country with a long tradition of milk production and the perfect conditions for grass-based dairy systems, we are perilously close to dropping below 10,000 dairy farmers in England and Wales (the current figure is about 13,000)— a drop of 20,000 in 20 years. Scotland has only 900.

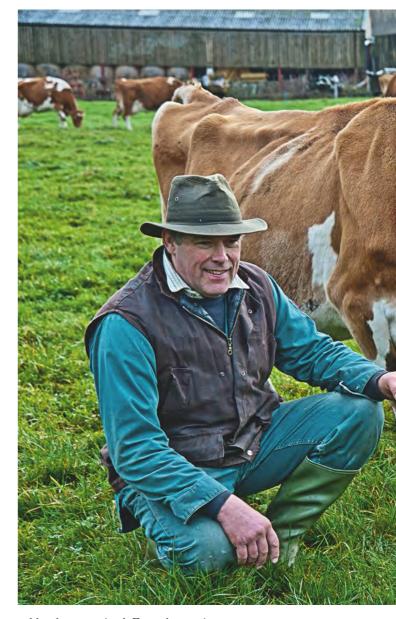
However, those vulnerable farmers are discovering an alternative, which allows them to stay in milk production, increase their margin and reconnect consumers with the traditions of dairy farming and the almost forgotten joys of creamy-top milk. It's called microdairying: farmers bypassing the major processors and supermarkets and producing, bottling and selling their cows' milk themselves.

Half a century ago, the countryside was full of dairy farmers bottling and selling some or all of their own milk locally, but the growth in supermarkets and the switch to refrigerated lorries sounded the death knell for many. No milk company is going to send a lorry down a small country road every other day to fetch a few hundred gallons of milk.

In 2006, the Norton family, who run a 60-cow herd near Norwich, were on the brink of quitting. 'The milk price had been so low that we had to do something,' says Emily Norton. 'We looked at selling the cows or increasing the herd size, but that would have ruined the balance of our mixed arable and livestock farm.' They installed a pasteurising and bottling plant and now sell almost half their milk within a 20-mile radius.

Susan Garbett and her husband, Julian, who run a 40-cow, free-range herd at Holmleigh Dairy in Gloucestershire, were also considered 'too small to survive'. 'It was just uneconomical to bring milk tankers to us,' she explains. They now deliver milk in recyclable glass bottles to 600 local residents. 'People appreciate that it's a local product. They drive past our fields and see the cows that provide their milk every week.'

It's not just about local provenance. Milk from most microdairies is being



sold unhomogenised. Even the semiskimmed varieties are sold with the creamy top, a treat the younger generation has been educated away from, says Sid Betteridge, who runs Mabel's Farm dairy, a 40-cow microdairy near Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire.

#### How the sums add up

O A microdairy can have 10–60 cows, although larger ones are usually unable to sell all their milk themselves and keep a regular contract with a processor. A herd of about 50 cows would provide enough milk for more than 500 households

O Most microdairies are not certified as organic, although many advertise themselves as having a free-range herd kept mainly outside. The milk is usually sold at a premium on supermarket milk, but is often price-competitive against that sold in local shops or through the few remaining doorstep deliveries

O Although comparisons have been made with microbreweries, the challenge of producing milk is much greater. Microbreweries are unlikely to grow their own crops, but a dairy farmer has a herd of cows to look after. There's also a processing unit to manage plus, crucially, a distribution and marketing operation. And there's far less

time to get milk to customers before it becomes worthless

O Several farmers have successfully applied to grant-making organisations, including The Prince's Countryside Fund, to help with start-up costs. Others have had success with crowdfunding, offering local residents the chance to invest in 'cow bonds', which allow farmers to buy new stock, paying the investors back their original sum plus interest, as well as supplying them with milk



'We're bringing back something people can't get in supermarkets,' adds Nick Snelgar, who started his business from scratch last year in the village of Martin, Hampshire. 'No one can do it as fresh as us. We can milk the cows at 9am and have it on your doorstep by 9am the next morning.' He plans to have a herd of 17 cows by the spring, enough, he says, for a viable business. 'We were told the only people who can make money out of dairying are mega companies. I don't believe that's true and I aim to prove it.'

Although there are no figures on the number of UK microdairies, farmers and industry experts are already excitedly talking about replicating the success of microbreweries, which number more than 1,000. 'There's no reason why we couldn't see microdairies all over the country,'

The cream
of the crop:
Julian and
Susan Garbett
have a 40-cow
herd at
Holmleigh Dairy,
Gloucestershire,
and deliver the
fresh milk to 600
local residents

says Mr Snelgar. 'Milk is far more relevant to people's daily lives than beer. It's a staple food. People may see it as boring or tasteless, and it's true that it's become that way, but we can change that.'

He's not alone in his optimism. 'Just as with bread and beer, milk has huge potential for innovation,' points out food-chain expert Clive Black, head of research at Shore Capital Stockbrokers. 'There's a growing market for exclusivity, taste and localism. People are well informed now by the internet, travel and education and want choice and individuality.' NFU Dairy Board chairman Rob Harrison agrees: 'People want to buy from someone they know. They don't necessarily want their money to go to big companies, so the opportunity is there to create your own local brand, support

#### Good week for

#### Flood defences

The Humber and Thames estuaries, Somerset Levels and Boston Barrier are among areas to benefit from the Government's £2.3 billion programme

#### Kestrels

They've had a good breeding year, with 22% more chicks per nest

#### **Brussels sprouts**

It's been perfect growing weather and a bumper crop of the Christmas veg is assured

#### Bad week for

#### Stonehenge

Ministers are persisting with the ludicrous idea of creating a tunnel instead of simply widening the A303 where congestion is significantly worse since the new layout—who wants to sit in an underground jam?

#### **The Turner Prize**

A leading art critic has suggested that it should have been withheld this year because the candidates were 'an indifferent bunch'

#### **Nativity plays**

Fewer schools are performing the traditional version, with aliens and footballers entering the script instead of angels and shepherds

the local economy and keep cows in the countryside.'

The microdairy model is already attracting new entrants, such as Josh Healy, who runs a 12-cow organic operation near Oxford. He delivers his milk in glass bottles to about 250 regular customers, most of whom are within five miles of the farm. 'I think a lot of dairy farmers enjoy not having to think about selling the milk and concentrating only on the production, but we are able to make quite good money on 37 acres.'

Mr Healy says microdairies can help shift public perceptions of milk as a cheap, standardised product. 'The difference in the quality is remarkable. It feels strange to call both what we produce and what's on most supermarket shelves by the same word. Craft brewers feel the same about their beers, I'm sure.' Emily Norton agrees: 'We're lucky to be able to drink what these animals produce. We should be shouting about that and reminding people that milk is a superfood and not just white water.'

#### **Town & Country**



### At last, a solution for Apethorpe

E NGLISH HERITAGE (EH) has finally managed to find the perfect solution for Apethorpe (above), the magnificent Jacobean palace in Northamptonshire that has been on its Heritage At Risk register for 16 years. Apethorpe has been bought, for £2.5 million, by Jean-Christophe Iseux, Baron von Pfetten, a French Anglophile who has made a commitment to open it to the public for 50 days a year, starting next July. Baron von Pfetten is a keen field sportsman: he hunts a pack of hounds in Burgundy and is a joint-master of the Woodland Pytchley in England. He and his wife, Nadia, from a family of architects, have restored a 17th-century château in Burgundy.

EH puts Apethorpe on a par with the great country houses of Hatfield and Knole (the latter the subject of a £19.7 million restoration by the National Trust) and architectural historian Marcus Binney describes it as 'a complete list of English architecture'. The original guide price for the house was £4.5 million–£5 million (*Country Life*, *Property*, *June* 4, 2008), but the reorganistion of EH may have dictated the eventual sale. The government body has spent £10 million halting decay to the roof and restoring fine Jacobean plasterwork, so it sounds as if £2.5 million is a bargain, but Apethorpe has no electricity or working bathroom or kitchen and will cost millions more to turn into a family home. Caretaker George Kelley, credited as 'the real hero' for keeping the house alive, says the outcome is 'brilliant. It will be nice to see some curtains up'. (*Parish Treasure*, page 32)

The way we were: this enticing poster for the Shell Guide to Cornwall, illustrated by Richard Eurich (1903–92), is up for auction in Onslows' next vintage poster sale, on December 18. It's estimated at £150–£200 and is one of a series of charming posters for the 'Shell Guides', including Hampshire (by Keith Shackleton), Nottinghamshire (David Gentleman) and Cardiganshire (Keith Grant).

Online bidding has opened; among the 300-plus posters, subjects include the early days of the RSPCA, Dublin Horse Show, the *Orient Express* and the First World War (01258 488838; www.onslows.co.uk)



# Where the art of drawing flourishes

HE art school devoted to drawing that The Prince of Wales co-founded in 2000 has been renamed The Royal Drawing School. This acknowledges the academic significance of Prince Charles's charity, which offers tuition in observational drawing in an age when most schools have diminished



Back to basics: The Royal Drawing School

the role of this fundamental skill. In the tradition of the great *ateliers*, it teaches drawing 'as a way of thinking, seeing and understanding', according to Catherine Goodman, the Artistic Director. 'We provide a lively environment for sustained exploration in drawing, in the belief that practice strengthens hand and eye and concentration nourishes the imagination.'

Established in east London, the school now has five venues in the city, with residencies in Scotland and Italy. The 2014 end-of-year exhibition is at The Royal Drawing School Shoreditch, 19–22, Charlotte Road, London EC2, until January 16, 2015 (020–7613 8568; http://royaldrawingschool.org). Mary Miers

Country Life job opportunities

T WO exciting opportunities have arisen to join the editorial staff of COUNTRY LIFE, the multi-award-winning and much-loved magazine, established in 1897. There is a position for a Deputy Features

Editor, for which the successful candidate will be creative, resourceful and literate and have good general knowledge; email with CV to Paula Lester, Acting Features Editor (paula.lester@timeinc.com). There is also a vacancy for a Picture Desk Assistant, a hugely varied post for which strong visual and organisational skills are essential. Apply to the Picture Editor, Vicky Wilkes (vicky.wilkes@timeinc.com).



Natura Harmona, one of a pair of late-17th-century Spanish school illustrations (estimated at £40,000–£60,000) that feature in Christie's South Kensington's themed auction 'Creatures Great and Small' on December 17. Lots include David Mach's silverback gorilla made from coat-hangers (£60,000–£80,000) and a leather cocktail cabinet in the shape of an elephant (£3,000–£5,000). Viewing is on December 13–16 (020–7930 6074; www.christies.com)

# How the RAF was born

THE role of airpower in the First World War is the subject of an inspiring new permanent exhibition (until the end of 2020) in a restored hangar at the Royal Air Force Museum at Hendon, north London. New exhibits convey the challenges faced by fighter pilots and technicians.

At the war's onset, flying was still seen as the pastime of millionaires, undertaken in fair weather and in daylight hours, and its strategic potential was barely considered. Pilots were expected to purchase their own garments and protection against



Get your head in the clouds: the 'First World War in the Air' exhibition in London

the cold was minimal. The combined numbers of the Royal Flying Corps and Royal Naval Air Service amounted to little more than 2,000, but, by 1918, these had been amalgamated into the RAF, with some  $300,\!000$  men and women in service.

As well as displays on figures such as Hugh Trenchard, the RAF's first Chief of Air Staff, space is found for the experiences of ordinary pilots, such as Lt Charles Wickenden, whose plane crashed in No Man's Land in 1917 and who may have suffered from what is now known as post-traumatic stress disorder (020–8205 2266; www.rafmuseum.org). *Jack Watkins* 

**Country Mouse** 

Finally-a frost

P OR the third year in a row, the meet at my parents' house was cancelled due to the waterlogged ground. The day itself started with a sharp frost, which finally dislodged the last of the leaves clinging to the big oak outside our garden. It's a funny thing—I yearn for the leaves to burst open in springtime, but, by this time of year, I don't really feel satisfied until the last one has cart-wheeled to earth. I am in love with each of our seasons. I need them to feel and be distinctive from each other.

The frost was welcome—it made the day feel like part of a proper December. Unlike last year's feeble effort, the countryside was spangled white and the morning air was especially delicious, although whether that it is due to taste, temperature or texture, I'm not sure.

The earlier rain, however, has soaked the land and driven the vermin from the fields and the hedgerows towards everyone's stables and outhouses, keeping our terriers in a constant state of frenzy. After two warm summers and a couple of mild winters, the populations of rats, mice and especially voles have exploded. We could do with more frosts. **MH** 

#### **Town Mouse**

The street where you lived

T'S always a delight to visit Leighton House, the studio house in Holland Park, W14, created for Frederic Lord Leighton, regarded by his contemporaries as another Michelangelo. Victorians knew they ought to honour genius, yet found the tools of critical judgment lacking. Artists exploited this uncertainty by insisting that they were taken at their own valuation: studio houses generally went up at the beginning of an artist's career, as an advertising prospect, rather than at the end, as a reward for financial success. Leighton's, with its Arab Hall modelled on a palace in Palermo, was dazzling.

Now, it's filled with paintings either by Leighton or his contemporaries, loaned from the astonishing Pérez Simón collection in Mexico. The culmination is Alma-Tadema's The Roses of Heliogabalus, showing guests at an imperial banquet being smothered (literally) with rose petals. Sublimely, the scent of roses has been diffused throughout the gallery, courtesy of Jo Malone. Photographs owned by Alma-Tadema show the care he took to get archaeological details right. Leighton's Crenaia, the Nymph of the Dargle, painted for Lord Powerscourt through whose estate the River Dargle runs, shows Leighton's model and mistress, Dorothy Dene, a south London girl whom he backed to be an actress. She's supposed to have been the inspiration for Eliza Doolittle in George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion. CA

Inglish Heritage; Angela Moore; Grahame White Factory

#### Town & Country Notebook Edited by Emma Hughes



#### Quiz of the week

- 1) Who was the Greek god of music? 2) If you suffer from podophobia, what are you afraid of?
- 3) The exclamation 'A handbag?' will forever be associated with which play?
- 4) What does the abbreviation 'CG' denote on an Ordnance Survey map?
- 5) The sackbut, popular during the Renaissance, was a type of what? A) Hot drink, B) Long-handled pipe,
- C) Musical instrument

#### 100 years ago in **COUNTRY LIFE**



☐ IR—Referring to the corre-Spondence on the use of dogs for the haulage of wheeled vehicles, I agree with the views expressed by Mr Arthur O. Cooke. There certainly is not any greater cruelty in using dogs for draught purposes than there is in using horses or oxen. I have seen dogs drawing loads in Belgium and Holland, and occasionally in the streets of Winnipeg. I enclose a photograph which I took not long since on the banks of the Meuse, at Laifour, in the Belgian Ardennes, showing a baker or milk-vendor with his trade-stock in a small cart, drawn by four dogs, harnessed abreast, and proceeding at a fast gallop. Miller Christy

#### Words of the week Adjuvant (Adjective) Helpful

Hypogenous (Adjective) Growing on the underside of something

Idioglossia (Noun)

A made-up language spoken by one person, or only a handful of people

1) Apollo 2) Feet 3) 'The Importance of Being Earnest' 4) A cattle grid 5) C (Musical

#### The nature of things Common dogwood

T takes the arrival of autumn 1 and winter to see dogwoods at their most striking. Cornus sanguinea is mostly content with the chorus line, forming inconspicuous, suckering shrubbiness among hedgerows on alkaline soils. It's also among the species of choice for quickly re-greening the stark margins of new roads, having some value as wildlife habitat and forage. In June, the tiny white flowers are dainty, but their unappealing smell means they're better left out of cut arrangements.

Yet dogwoods are capable of taking the star turn as autumn

sets their foliage ablaze in salmon and ruby hues and, when winter arrives, the bare wands shimmer in crimson and scarlet; numerous cultivated varieties turn neon-bright (Cornus sanguinea Midwinter Fire is one of the best). Landscapers love planting them by water to invigorate the short, monochrome days of winter with mirrored colour. Common dogwood was also just plain useful for centuries; its hard

wood made excellent butchers' skewers, mill-cogs,

bobbins and wheel spokes and smouldered in the kilns of charcoal-burners. One method of identifying dogwood in summer is to gently tear a leaf across the middle. Thin strings of elastic tissue appear, like gossamer-fine strands of melted mozzarella, holding the broken leaf together. **KBH** 

Illustration by Bill Donohoe

#### Time to buy

**Standing** robin decorations, from £14 each, Indigo and Rose (01924 242799; www. indigoandrose.



**'Christmas** Joy' wreath, from £85, Clifton Nurseries (020-7289 6851: www. clifton.co.uk)



Knitted gingerbread man Christmas decoration, £5.50, The National Gallery (020-7747 2870; www.nationalgallery.co.uk)

#### Britain's best pubs

#### The Felin Fach **Griffin, Powys**

This country inn is an excellent place for a self-indulgent night or two-and dogs are pampered here, too.

Back from a crisp walk on the Brecon Beacons or laden with books from Hay-on-Wye, you'll find a big fire and soft leather sofas welcoming you in the sizeable pubby bar. The drinks range is first class, with plenty of unusual items, and the staff are kind and helpful.

You can eat in the bar, but it's worth booking a table in one of the two pretty little front dining rooms, reminiscent of a civilised farmhouse. Inventive cooking of superb ingredients, including produce from the owners' organic garden, ensures some memorable meals. The bedrooms are very comfortable and a good, filling breakfast is on offer. Closed January 12-15.

(01874 620111; www.felinfachgriffin.co.uk)

Alisdair Aird is co-editor of 'The Good Pub Guide 2015', out now from Ebury (\$15.99)

#### Unmissable events

#### **Exhibitions** December 11-12 'Tottering-by-Gently',

William Evans, 67A, St James's Street, London SW1. COUNTRY LIFE'S Annie Tempest comes to London, where she'll be creating a cartoon for the magazine (right), as well as signing prints and books. 10am-6pm Thursday, 10am-12pm Friday (020-7493 0415; www.william evans.com)

#### **Until December 13** 'Ed Kluz: The Lost House Revisited',

Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood, Kent. Collages exploring the rise and fall of some of Britain's greatest country houses, marking 40 years since the 1974 exhibition 'The Destruction of the Country House' (01892 839039; www.mascallsgallery.org)

December 15-January 9 'Rurrell at Ronhams: a selection of treasures from Glasgow', Bonhams, 101. New Bond Street. London W1. More than 45 star pieces from the



world-famous Burrell Collection (020-7447 7447; www.bonhams.com)

#### Talk

#### **December 12 Drew** Gardner Wootton Talks,

Wootton Village Hall, Wootton-by-Woodstock, Oxfordshire. The celebrated photographer on his series 'The Descendants', for which he tracked down living descendants of famous people and re-created iconic paintings and photographs in minute detail, using costumiers, as well as hair and make-up artists. 7.30pm, tickets £6 (www.woottontalks. co.uk)

Alnwick, Northumberland. Artisan-made traditional gifts for sale, plus festive food and drink and live caroling. 12pm-6pm (01665 511350; www. alnwickgarden.com)

December 13-14 **Brontë Parsonage Museum Christmas** weekend, Haworth, West Yorkshire. Talks, walks, readings of festive passages from classic texts and drop-in activities, including creating your

own baubles. Free with admission to the museum (above) (01535 642323;

December 18-21 **Wintershall Nativity** 

play, Wintershall estate, Bramley, Surrey. Complete with shepherds and sheep, donkeys and the Three Wise Men on horseback. Performances at 4.45pm and 7.30pm on December 18 and 19 and 2.30pm and 5.30pm on December 20 and 21. Adult tickets £16.50, children £8.50 (www. wintershall-estate.com; 01793 418299)

#### Do you own Britain's naughtiest dog?

For details of how to enter our competition, Britain's Naughtiest Dog, in association with Lily's Kitchen, visit www.countrylife.co.uk/baddog. The winner will appear on the cover of Country Life. Entry deadline is January 15, 2015.

R IGHT, confession time. I'm not a fan of hanging, especially game. Never have been, not since I was first made to pluck August grouse that had been in the larder for a fortnight.

Less is more for me and subtlety the key. Give me a bird to eat on the day it's shot—or at least within 24 hours. The flavours are there. but not to such an extent that they grab your tastebuds in a nostril-flaring, vicelike grip.

Do the French suspend their game for weeks? Non, monsieur. And the Spanish process their wonderful partridges almost



#### Hanging in the balance

Can you have too much of a good thing?

immediately, often in a delicious stew that they call escabeche.

I know conventional wisdom dictates that beef (and, to a lesser extent, lamb)

should be hung for weeks and weeks, but I'll never forget an Argentinian surprise I was given a few years back. We had arrived at an estancia to help with its dove problem—and quite a problem it was. As we girded our loins, the host asked me which steer we wished to eat for lunch. I must have looked non-plussed, because he waved his arms expansively at a paddock containing several beasts. 'Um, that one in the corner,' I mumbled eventually, feeling a tad guilty as I pointed. A mere four hours later, we ate the best beef I've ever tasted. Mark Firth

#### What to drink this week Growers' Champagnes

This Christmas, give something a little different a whirl, says Harry **Evres** 



CHAMPAGNE has almost always been dominated by the grandes marques, the houses with palatial premises on the Avenue de Champagne in Epernay or around the Boulevard Lundy and the Rue Coquebert in Reims. I admire some grandes marques, but their non-vintage wines are produced on quite a large scale, involving broad-brush blending. There is another way.

#### Why you should be drinking it

If you're interested in a more finetuned approach, there are good reasons to delve into the world of Champagnes from individual growers and smaller houses, which use a more artisanal approach.

#### What to buy now

- Blanc de blancs Champagnes, made entirely from Chardonnay, are lighter and more delicate. Grower Pierre Gimonnet et Fils is a specialist at this style and its Cuvée Cuis 1er Cru (£31.90; www.toscanaccio. co.uk) is a lovely, rather gentle wine.
- Devaux's Blanc de Noirs (£35; www.oddbins.com) is made from 100% Pinot Noir. This is much bigger-boned, with a smoky, gamey nose that I love, but which may take you by surprise if you're used to light, frothy bubbly.
- Champagne's least fashionable grape is Pinot Meunier, but it can express forward fragrance and freshness. Try H. Blin's mainly Meunier Brut (£25; www.oddbins.com).

The

Picture Library;

COUNTRY

• Other growers' Champagnes I enjoy include Thierry Triolet's refreshing Brut (£19.99; www. champagnewarehouse.com) and the more symphonic Egly-**Ouriet Tradition** (£39.95; www.leaandsandeman.co.uk).



EGLY-OURIET



### Letter of the week Growing old graciously



M AY I urge your correspondent of November 26 to rethink her decision to decline the offer of a seat on the Tube: it's the duty of the seniors of the tribe to offer an example of courteous acceptance of help, even if we hope we don't look as if we need it. I was once with an elderly friend who was offered a seat by a younger lady and, like your correspondent, he refused, as he intensely dislikes to be thought of as frail. The lady was embarrassed and

didn't know whether or not to resume her seat. I felt embarrassed for them both. One should never refuse a kindness or a compliment. *Jane Whiter, Hampshire* 

The writer of the letter of the week will win a bottle of Pol Roger Brut Réserve Champagne

#### Bridge over Cambridge water



I WAS interested to see that you consider Oxford to be the correct answer to the fourth question in Quiz of the Week (Notebook, November 26): 'In which British university city would you find the Bridge of Sighs?' Although Oxford does indeed have a bridge popularly known by that name, the one in Cambridge (above), so much admired by Queen Victoria, must take precedence, having been constructed in 1831, long before Oxford's 20th-century example. Adrian Pickett, by email

Annie get your gun

I READ Lucy Baring's November 5 Spectator with interest. My mother was also a very good shot. She was called Anne and grew up at Choppings Hall in Coddenham, Suffolk, where she learnt how to wield a gun at a young age—possibly because her slightly older brother, Douglas, was already shooting. At about 16, she was allowed to join the grown-ups on her first proper shoot. She accomplished a left



and a right straight off and, after the shoot, was informed she wouldn't be shooting with the grown-ups again. Clearly, men of a certain age didn't want to be shown up by a mere girl in 1935. The war was not far off and, when the family fortunes fell off a cliff, she joined the American Red Cross and took to painting nose art on the B-17 bombers of the US Eighth Airforce, based at Great Ashfield in Suffolk. It became an official war effort, so she ended up using not a gun but art to fight the war. Fiona Carville, by email

#### Doing cart wheels

Y OUR recent article on Wentworth Woodhouse, South Yorkshire (November 12) brought back many memories. The way the government

of the time treated the house and its wonderful gardens and, indeed, the Fitzwilliam family made me furious.

I went to the great sale in 1949. One could pick up the most amazing things for very little. I was a poor undergraduate at the time, but managed to buy a magnificent portrait of Sir Robert Walpole by Stephen Slaughter for ten bob [50p]. I later lent it to the Commons Dining Room. I also bought paintings of horses and cattle for about 5s [25p] each.

On the last day of the sale, the whole frontage of Wentworth was the background for a display of scores of wheeled vehicles from the stables. I managed to outbid a rag-and-bone man for the last lot in the sale—a magnificent carriage in the Fitzwilliam livery colours. The man wanted the wheels for his cart! I had to go up to \$2.50, but I saved it.

I assumed that Wentworth would suffer the same fate as hundreds of other fine

> houses, which were being demolished. The progress towards its rescue is the best news I've

heard in a long time.

Robert Innes-Smith,

Derbyshire

Carry on campaigning

A NGELA FINCH suggests that, having recently relinquished his chairmanship of the National Trust, Simon Jenkins should lead a nationwide campaign to save our countryside from bad planning—a laudable suggestion, but an unnecessary proposition (Letters, November 19).

Although we may all be frustrated by many aspects of the National Planning Policy Framework, the CPRE, founded in 1926, along with others, achieved a much better outcome than was proposed in the original draft legislation and, in so doing, saved a generation of career politicians from the legitimate wrath of future generations for the pointless despoiling of the English countryside. The CPRE has had many other successes, for instance, the establishing of national parks, the green belt and AONBs. Perhaps your correspondent will become an active member of the CPRE? Peter Waine, former Chairman

Contactus

of the CPRE (2008-14)

(photographs welcome)

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COUNTRY LIFE Editorial, Blue Fin
Building, 110, Southwark
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#### The saviour of Staunton

OT 10: The Georgian mansion known as Staunton Harold Hall, together with seventy four acres of land, and the cottage at Melbourne Lodge... any increase on £12,000? SOLD, to Thomas Oakley (Luton) Ltd., Demolition Contractors.'

This was how I began our bulletin for November 2014, to mark the 60th anniversary of that sad occasion. I didn't know how widespread Thomas Oakley's operations were before reading your piece on Hadlow Tower (November 19). Staunton in Leicestershire (above) was saved largely by the efforts of Countess Ferrers, whose home it had been. She persuaded Leonard Cheshire to visit; he paid the company \$16,000 to buy it back and the house became the largest of his Cheshire Homes.

We must not be too quick to condemn Thomas Oakley. Companies like this were the logical outcome of a common thought that considered old buildings as being 'unsuited to modern living'. Under this mantra, no old building was safe.

Now, I believe the pendulum has swung too far the other way. Owners are not considered capable of making even the smallest changes without the rubber stamp of officialdom. What would the original builders make of that? John Blunt, Staunton Harold Hall, Leicestershire





# We must preserve our property rights

**6** Private property

is the fundamental

guarantee of freedom 9

he class war has reared its ugly head again in the UK. Those who thought it had died with the defeat of Marxism forget that its root is envy—the Deadly Sin most persuasive for politicians. Their target is, as always, property. For them, it symbolises the gulf between 'haves' and 'have-nots'. We should not, therefore, be surprised at the rhetoric around the so-called 'mansion tax' in England or at the overt attacks on landowners in Scotland. These are obvious targets for those who want to exploit grievance and profit from dissatisfaction. However, the destructive history of such assaults on property

should warn us not to allow them to go unchallenged. There is much more at stake than the comfort of the 'haves'.

After all, private property is the fundamental guarantee of freedom. That's why it's enshrined in the UN charter and the basic law of the EU.

It's also why it's always the target of radical politicians and revolutionaries. They recognise that property ownership gives stability to society and anchors its interests in continuity. It is a steadfast barrier to revolutionary change—right or left.

Thus, it's important not to dismiss Scotland's new First Minister's opening shots in her war against landlords. Clearly, she was raising the centuries-old resentment against the Clearances and the continuing anger against the other excesses of the past. She therefore failed to remind her audience of what the workers on the great estates wanted to make her understand. Ideological land reform will 'sacrifice the jobs of working people such as gamekeepers, stalkers and land and river ghillies, and their families, who will be the first people to suffer if investments are withdrawn and taken elsewhere'. The Scottish Gamekeepers Association recognises that the landowners are part and parcel of the economy. Their sporting businesses bring \$470 million

a year into Scotland, which can only be sustained by the scale and professionalism of the land holdings. It's a prize that other countries with similarly rugged landscapes would love to own.

But hidden in Nicola Sturgeon's speech was a further dangerous proposition. She confirmed that the Scottish Government was planning to overhaul the laws of succession in order to give greater rights to all children to inherit. This, of course, is designed to destroy primogeniture and make the break-up of estates inevitable.

Not that this is the first time primogeniture has been questioned. Reformers have long argued the unfairness of winner takes all, but many

families, great and more humble, have seen that only through primogeniture is it possible to keep an estate intact or enable the next generation to build on what has been achieved in this (Country Life, June 26, 2013). It is what has to happen

if continuity is to trump equality and it's a sentiment to which Britain owes much of its stability and solidity. Of course, it doesn't appeal to today's Levellers, but people like them are never happy with anyone succeeding to anything.

Indeed, when the Napoleonic code abolished primogeniture, it wasn't done by accident and the damage done continues on the Continent today. The purpose was to diminish the importance of family. Revolutionaries hate anything multigenerational, particularly the idea that people might look back in gratitude to their ancestors and therefore look forward with generosity to their grandchildren. They see that this is the process that provides the bulwark against sudden and far-reaching change. It's what most guarantees the stability of society as people work not for themselves, but for their children and take pride in handing on what they have received, preserved and enhanced.



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### The season of material possessions

TOP all the clocks, cut off the telephone: Campbells of Beauly is no more at home. After 158 years and four generations of the same family at the helm, Scotland's premier tweed house will reach the end of the bolt with the retirement of its sibling owners in March next year. Sad though this is, there's comfort in the revelation that the business will continue under a new ownership, which will retain much of the familiar traditional pattern.

# 6 Cool in summer, warm in winter, tweed reeks of tradition 9

Why all the fuss, you may ask. Big news in the Highlands usually carries more of a 'stop press' quality about it. Just look at some of our recent stories: 'Quakes Hit! Two small earthquakes have hit the Highlands though residents will not have known.' Or 'Blazing row over beards—Shetland island of Bressay has lost fire crew because two members refuse to shave off their beards ahead of the annual Viking fire festival'. And 'Society ball held in Portree last night; there were no arrests'.

owever, around here, Bobby H Campbell's, as it's universally known after the late incumbent, is news. It's much more than just a business—it's an institution. It has made Beauly a destination for generations of visitors to the Highlands. And it has been woven into the warp and weft of my life for as long as I can remember. When I reached 13, my first shooting suit was built there and lasted me for as long as it decently could, before the waistcoat buttons exploded, Tom Kitten-like, and a replacement had to be afforded.

were scaled by courageous ladies trailing perilously long tartan shawls. Material was measured out against a rule let into the counter and cut with a giant pair of tailoring shears. The dark recesses and hushed tones of the assistants gave the place a shrine-like reverence.



my father's military career around the world, parcels wrapped up in brown paper and string, featuring the curlicue script of the Campbells label, followed us everywhere. The celebrated reversible woollen tie—a different colour either side—figured in many a Christmas present for 'the man who has everything'. And the stocking left out for Father Christmas was infallibly of the same provenance. Nothing less would do.

No trip north was complete without a visit to Bobby Campbell's. Inside, the man himself cut a splendid patrician figure, his polished pate presiding over an interior that was changeless. Bolts of tweed and tartan, a veritable encyclopedia of district checks and clans, ascended on shelves to the ceiling alongside a kaleidoscope of cashmere jumpers.

Ladders to the top shelves

geous as the tartans to which it relates.

y long
I was ule let twith twith hears. Highlands during the sporting season, when the great houses and lodges were taken by large parties for a month or more.

There was a legend that capital for Campbells had come from a dramatic incident in the 19th century. Beaufort Castle had been leased by Lord Lovat to the wealthy American Phipps family for the summer sporting season. Looking out of the window, young master Phipps spied someone fishing on the River Beauly below. As the fishings were included in the lease, that had to be a poacher. Phipps

In the ensuing brouhaha, it was gently explained that the writ of the Wild West didn't run in Inverness-shire. A hefty sum changed hands to smooth matters over and the survivor made use of it in the business.

loosed off a rifle shot, which

winged the interloper.

Like some of the myth that surrounds Highland dress, the story has, no doubt, improved considerably in the telling. But it makes a good yarn, as colourful as the tartans to which it relates. In the drawing rooms after dinner, guests would select tweeds and tartans from his swatches, which would be sent off to them wherever they lived. Even today, Campbells bags can be seen making their way towards

tailors along the streets of Hong Kong or New York. Cool in summer, warm in winter, tweed reeks of trad-

> ition and Campbells has guarded that element fiercely. These days, a greater proportion of visitors come from

abroad, but there is no question of compromise on design and no danger of furnishing a tweed the likes of which Old Bassett had been wearing when Bertie Wooster remarked: 'Prismatic is the only word for those frightful tweeds and, oddly enough, the spectacle of them had the effect of steadying my nerves. They gave me the feeling that nothing mattered.'

James, Catriona and Miriam Campbell, Bobby's children and the fourth generation in the business, have run Campbells between them for nearly half a century. The new owners are Charlie Brooke and James Sugden, both of whom have deep connections in the textile business. Charlie, who's a Highland farmer, is part of the Huddersfield family woollen mill firm John Brooke & Sons. which was founded in 1541 and is the oldest family firm in Britain. James has spent a large part of his career with the knitwear firm Johnstons of Elgin.

Although the names may be changing, the new owners adjure that the thread of tradition that has wound through the past 158 years will remain unbroken. That's big news around here.

Joe Gibbs lives at Belladrum in the Highlands and is the founder of the Tartan Heart Festival

**Next week: Tom Parker Bowles** 

Whole wardrobes at home bulge

with generations of tweed suits for

both sexes, bearing the Campbells

imprint. As we trailed after



# DIAMOND JUBILEE Ceorge Pragnell





#### My favourite painting Virginia McKenna

#### George Adamson, with Boy and Christian by Gary Hodges



George Adamson, with Boy and Christian by Gary Hodges (b.1954), 171/4in by 291/2in, Collection: Virginia McKenna



Virginia McKenna is a Founder Trustee of the Born Free Foundation, conservationist, campaigner, writer and actress. Her collection of poems, *Tonight The Moon* is Red, was published in September

6 It was in the 1980s that my husband, Bill, and I first came across the work of Gary Hodges. We bought a wonderful drawing he did of a mother elephant and calf. When George Adamson was killed, 25 years ago this year, I knew that I wanted to have an image of him with two lions that meant the world to him—Boy, with whom we had worked on the film Born Free in 1964, and Christian, who rose to fame through a documentary my husband made called Christian, the Lion at World's End. Gary's extraordinary drawing of George and these lions hangs on a wall in my home, and I could not have wished for a more perfect visual memory ▶

### John McEwen comments on George Adamson, with Boy and Christian

HEN, in 1989, Gary Hodges first met Virginia McKenna and her late husband, Bill Travers (1922–94), he was already established as a wildlife artist of meticulous pencil drawings, with a popular following for his print reproductions. He was also a campaigner for the rights and protection of animals, especially with regard to their treatment by zoos. The couple had founded Zoo Check (later the Born Free Foundation) and they bought a drawing by Mr Hodges. Thus began an enduring friendship.

In 1964, they starred as Joy and George Adamson in the film version of the former's bestseller *Born Free*, her account of their life with Elsa, a Kenyan lioness reared by them and then released back into the wild. Following their meeting with the Adamsons, Miss McKenna and Travers dedicated them-

selves to wildlife causes. After George's murder by poachers in 1989, Miss McKenna commissioned this drawing for the memorial service. As a limited-edition print, it transformed the secondary market for Mr Hodges's work.

Older readers may have seen Christian, who was bought as a cub from Harrods in 1969 and lived in the basement of Sophisticat, the antique pine-furniture shop, on the King's Road. A chance meeting at Sophisticat between his young Australian masters, who worked in the shop, and Miss McKenna and her husband led to the cub's transfer to Adamson in Kenya. There, he met Boy, who had starred in *Born Free*.

Christian was eventually returned to the wild. Film documentaries of him entitled *Christian the Lion*, co-produced by Travers, are available from the Born Free Foundation.

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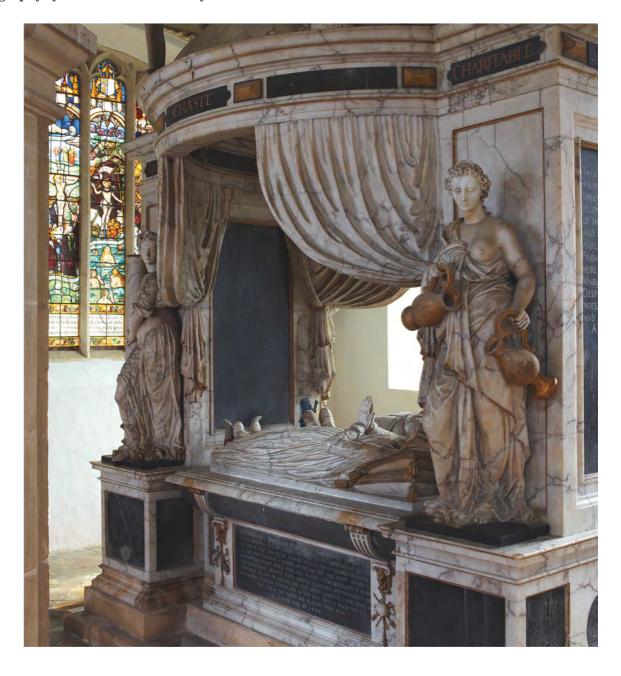
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## Parish church treasures Inciting to virtue

Photography by Paul Barker and text by John Goodall



N 1621, a new chapel was added to the church at Apethorpe. Its centrepiece is this tomb to the courtier and ambassador Sir Anthony Mildmay and his wife, Grace. It is created of black and white marble and has been attributed to the sculptor Maximilian Colt. Certainly, the swept-back curtains and naturalism of the figures speak of the monument's exceptional quality.

As an inscription explains, it was completed by the Mildmays' daughter and son-in-law to their memory and 'to excite [the viewer] to the example of their virtues'. And virtue is certainly writ large here. Supporting the canopy over the recumbent effigies are figures



The Church of St Leonard, Apethorpe, Northamptonshire

representing the four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude. Charity crowns the entire monument, flanked by the figures of Hope and Faith, the three Theological Virtues of the Christian.

In a band around the monument are inscribed the words devoute, chaste, charitable, just, valiant, wise. The chapel architecture incorporates further panels painted with biblical quotations and stained glass of 1621 in the east window depicts the Garden of Eden, the Crucifixion, the Harrowing of Hell, the Last Judgement and the Apocalypse. A silk tabard painted with heraldry associated with the tomb also hangs in the church.



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### How we reinvigorated the river

F you look out from any of the high points of the garden here at Easton in Lincolnshire, you can see that the sweep of parkland embraces ancient pastureland, wonky mature trees and old walls. Running through the middle is the young River Witham (actually more of a stream for most of the year). Once a much bigger beast, the river has shaped the landscape over thousands of years and created an undulating valley—an inspiring and beautiful location for the original medieval garden.

In the Tudor or Jacobean period, the river was turned from its original course, close up against the snowdrop bank, moved to the other side of the valley floor and canalised for about a third of a mile. Downstream, a weir was built and part of the canal became a flat pool, reflecting the house on the terraces above. Due to the demolition of the house and a lack of maintenance to the grounds in the second half of the 20th century, the dam collapsed, the river shrank and cattle damaged the banks.

For the past decade or so, the 'problem' of the river has been on my mind. It had become silted up, reeds rampaged through the boggy ground and it was prone to flooding. Despite our patient annual requests, the Environment Agency had bigger priorities. Then, last year, it joined forces with the Wild Trout Trust to help us create a haven for small trout, bullheads, kingfishers, mayfly and native crayfish. It's a minor miracle



Our stretch of river is now a sanctuary for fish, birds and insects

that has allowed us to create an ecological sanctuary without compromising a long history of horticulture here.

When the funding came through from the Water Framework Directive, with additional support from rod-licence money, work began in the park. With the help of mechanical diggers, we were able to pile reeds onto the banks and a watery path appeared through the vegetation.

By way of a small diversion from the point, diggers are one of the joys of making a garden and, if you can think of any excuse to hire a mini-digger this winter, then do. Every man I know loves digging ponds or landscaping. Every man I know has also put the digger bucket through a water pipe, so you might like to factor a visit from the plumber into your budget. Electricity cables can be a more serious hazard.

Within the gardens, even minidiggers were out of the question, so the team came armed with waders and faggots. Faggots are bundles of coppiced wood that are staked horizontally along the edge of the stream and act like semiporous sandbags. Silt is lifted out of the riverbed and stacked behind the line. The bundles are placed at varying angles to the flow, allowing its speed to be manipulated.

In slow areas, vegetation provides sanctuary for small critters and helps prevent flooding. Faster water cleans the gravel of silt, increases oxygen and provides spawning grounds for trout. There are signs of success: six trout redds were recorded in the river last winter.

The movement of birds enhances every winter garden and having any type of clear water is the easiest way to encourage them on to your patch as they go about the serious business of staying alive in cold weather. For us, that means noisy wrens among the reeds and grey wagtails at the water's edge. Occasionally, a piercing cheep and a flash of iridescent blue marks the kingfisher's indignant departure from his feeding post. Thrushes and blackbirds use shallow areas for bathing and, when the ground freezes, flowing water is a lifeline for thirsty birds of all sizes.

# 6 If you can think of any excuse to hire a minidigger, then do

Our new-look river has also improved the gardens' design. Delineation provided by the faggots means the native reeds and herbage look tidier. On the eastern side, increased depth of water in a narrower channel has allowed sharp edges to be cut and the lawns can be mown to the water's edge. New areas have been opened up for possible marginal planting, but caution is required. If, as here, a water feature is part of the river system, it is important not to introduce the wrong species. The spread of Himalayan balsam on other waterways is a salutary reminder of our obligations.

Ursula Cholmeley is the owner of Easton Walled Gardens, Lincolnshire (www.eastonwalled gardens.co.uk)

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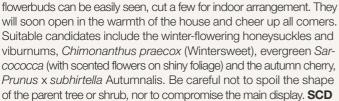
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Next week: Dickens in the garden

#### Horticultural aide memoire

No. 50: Bring winter shoots indoors

Shrubs that flower in the middle of winter are always welcome and are best planted near a path or doorway where they can be readily appreciated. When the swollen



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## The shapeliness of snow

Bighton House, Bighton, Alresford, Hampshire

Snow presents the opportunity to look at our gardens and surroundings with different eyes, writes **Kirsty Fergusson**Photographs by Allan Pollok-Morris







HE Japanese have a name for it: yukimi, or snowviewing. Come the first snowfall (or, similarly, when the cherries are in blossom or the maples are turning fiery crimson), a meditative and appreciative audience directs its steps towards an advantageously placed tea house in order to contemplate the garden or the wider landscape in its seasonal finery. For those of a metaphysical disposition, snow-viewing is a revelatory experience: far from being concealed, without the distractions of colour and texture, the garden under snow yields up its essence, offering glimpses of profound simplicity, in which the elemental structures of the natural world are revealed.

In the Anglo-Saxon world, however, the first snowfall of the year is unlikely to be greeted with much in the way of serene contemplation. Startled at the sudden transformation outdoors—at least, in the south of England, where two snowy winters in a decade are viewed as harbingers of the next Ice Age—the gardening community suddenly splits into those who adopt a cheery, sporting attitude to Nature's

#### 6 The garden under snow yields up its essence, offering glimpses of profound simplicity 9

unexpected gift of a holiday from winter chores and those who take a bleaker view of things, shouldering the shovel with stoic resignation and casting doubtful glances at the freighted branches and greenhouse thermometer.

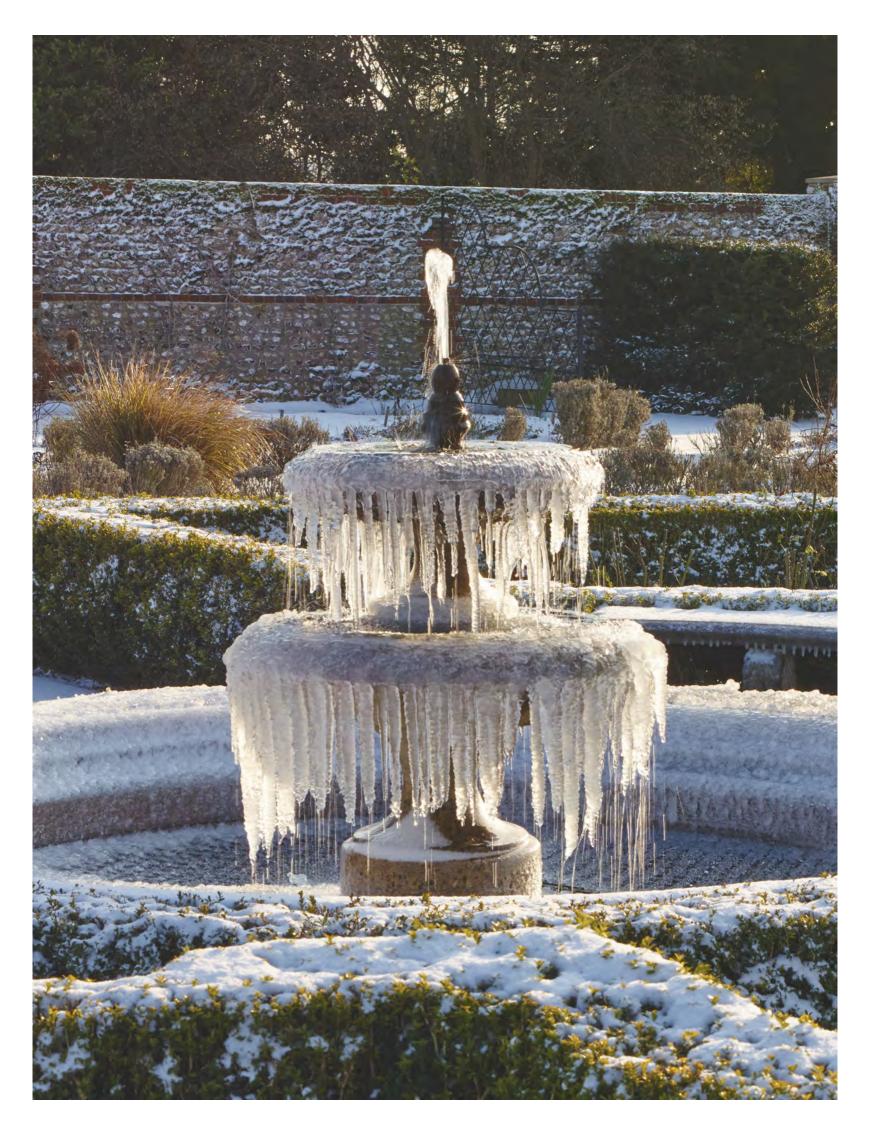
Artists are, of course, natural adepts at looking at the world with different eyes and many have regarded snow as a magical lens through which something more essential than mere appearance may be apprehended (Country Life, December 18/25, 2013). Whether that something is to be celebrated or regarded with a shudder of horror appears to depend on the prevailing cultural climate. The exceptionally severe winter of 1565, when Pieter Bruegel the Elder created what is thought to be the first winter

landscape painting, *The Hunters* in the Snow, heralded a rather jolly rash of Flemish winter scenes, corresponding to a century and a half of cold weather, which must strike a chord with sporting snow enthusiasts.

The 19th century, on the other hand, which also witnessed decades of ice-bound winters, saw artists and writers looking rather more fearfully at snow as an instrument of annihilation. Snow-bound gardeners of the glummer type will readily concur with Melville's observation in *Moby Dick* that 'the palsied universe lies before us a leper; and like willful travellers in Lapland, who refuse to wear colored and coloring glasses upon their eyes, so the wretched infidel gazes himself blind at the monumental white shroud that wraps all the prospect around him'.

A spot of *yukimi* (in preference to Melvillean horror) in advance of the urge to rush out with the toboggan or shovel might not, however, be such a bad idea. Because, once we've got over the surprise of seeing the familiar colours and textures of winter replaced with pretty white icing and look a bit harder, it becomes clear that snow >

Preceding pages: Under a snowy blanket, the muted colours of the English winter appear in subtle hues of brown and green. A gridpatterned box parterre by Christopher **Bradley-Hole** is one of several hedged environments laid out in the late 1990s. Above: The beauty of beech. celebrated with an enclosure of yew. Facing page: Glorious icicles suggest a fountain from Narnia (although the plumbing may have taken a battering)





(unless it's fallen in positively Siberian quantities and blizzards excepted) has a way of highlighting structure—or the deficiency thereof—in the outside world. Which is why gardens with a formal structure defined by avenues, hedging or topiary tend to look more interesting under snowy conditions than, say, cottage gardens or prairie-style plantings, which seem lumpy and incoherent when colour and texture are obliterated.

Recorded here is Bighton House, near Alresford in Hampshire, when the world has come to a snowy standstill. At any time of year, the views south over the wide agricultural landscape towards the westernmost shoulders of the South Downs are astonishingly untouched by industry or urban development; moonlight, not the glow of sodium street lighting, spreads across the gardens, woods and fields on cloudless nights. Under snow, with thin trails of wood smoke rising on the silent morning air from distant farmsteads, the sense of timelessness is complete.

The house dates from 1844, but the scale and rhythm of the façade, the long, light-filled windows and the simplicity of the exterior decoration proclaim Georgian rather than Victorian values. In the garden, beneath the south façade, square blocks of yew topiary, designed by Christopher Bradley-Hole and reflecting the elegant austerity of the architecture, are thrown into relief by light and shadow; snow—and raking winter light—make formal green structures almost as legible as printed words upon the page.

The old and new lime avenues that punctuate the drive through Bighton's park are similarly transformed by snow into hieroglyphs of structural organisation and the walled kitchen garden, edged in trim box, reveals the patterns of the ordered beds, lost in the colourful mayhem of summer or earthy winter emptiness.

When the structural bones of the garden have been laid bare by snow, a silent revelation of an altogether different character has also taken place: the bird and animal population has written a busy night of foraging and exploration in delicate tracks

that circle the house and loop across the lawns and drive, disappearing into the woodland and fields of stubble that fringe the garden. The birch wood, traversed by a broad ride, is criss-crossed with crazy rabbit, purposeful fox and meandering roedeer tracks. For a few short days, snow permits us to see what is normally available only to the dog's nose.

As dusk falls and the afternoon fires are lit, the snow starts to fall again. Grids of light from the tall, lamp-lit windows lie on the snowy lawns and topiary squares. Yet, as Louis MacNeice observes in his celebrated poem *Snow*, there is more than glass separating us from a world transformed by snowfall. For MacNeice, the revelation is neither freighted with horror nor delightfully benign—neither 'spiteful' nor 'gay'—but wonderfully *various*.

And perhaps that is the best lesson to be absorbed when the snow arrives: to seize the fleeting opportunity to look with different eyes and take pleasure in the incorrigible plurality of our gardens.

Above: The tiny footprints of animals have 'written a busy night of foraging and exploration', describing their unseen nocturnal activities. Right: A grid maze of yews reflects the proportions of the elegant house, enhancing its appearance of 'anchorage' to the park beyond





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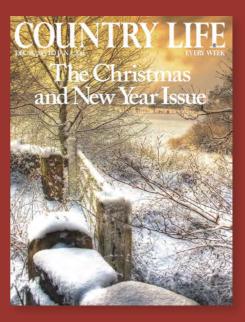
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## Entire magnificence

Lancaster House, London SW1 Managed by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office

As an intensely used venue for diplomatic entertainment, this great house can perhaps claim to be the capital's greatest public secret. **John Goodall** reports

Photographs by Will Pryce



ONDON is a city with many astounding interiors, yet, for sheer opulence and scale, those at Lancaster House in SW1 are nowhere exceeded. For this great house was begun as the palace of an heir to the throne—the 'Grand Old' Duke of York of nursery-rhyme fame—and was completed by one of the wealthiest families in the kingdom as their London house. Today, it remains in use as a venue for government entertainment and, since the London Olympics in 2012, has been rehung with pictures to dramatic effect.

Lancaster House is the successor to Godolphin House on the Mall, which the Duke of York acquired in 1807. After toying with the idea of extending this 1690s building, he determined instead on its replacement. By April 1815, Robert Smirke, by now appointed to the Office of Works, was drawing up proposals for a new residence on the site. The king deeply disapproved of Smirke's plans, but—

#### This opulent house was begun as a palace for the "Grand Old" Duke of York of nurseryrhyme fame

slightly mysteriously—was enthusiastic when a fresh design was presented by the brothers Benjamin and Philip Wyatt, sons of the prolific and influential architect James Wyatt. He commanded the Duke to adopt the Wyatts' proposal and Smirke was ignominiously ditched.

The figure behind the change of architect, and possibly also the King's change of heart, was the Duke of York's mistress, Elizabeth, Duchess of Rutland. She had previously engaged the Wyatts in major changes to Belvoir

Castle. Benjamin, the senior figure in the partnership, had begun his career in India and, in 1807, had been appointed secretary to the future Duke of Wellington, Sir Arthur Wellesey. From 1811, he turned his hand to architecture and made his name with the new Drury Lane Theatre. After 1815, he was assiduous in seeking out a new palace for the victor of Waterloo, drawing up designs for what was, in effect, a second Blenheim.

Wyatt's ambitions for this Waterloo Palace were never realised, but some of its ideas were to find expression in the Duke of York's new house, the foundation stone of which was laid on July 17, 1825. The Duchess of Rutland energetically drove the work forward, but died unexpectedly in November 1825, to the mutual great grief of both her lover and her husband. Despite this setback, the external shell stood complete within 11 months.

The building was four-square with a pyramidal roof enclosed by balustrades; >

Fig 1 above:
The south
façade of
Lancaster
House, London
SW1. Robert
Smirke added
the upper storey
to the original
building

Fig 2 facing page: The stair hall with its skylight supported on the backs of caryatids. The idea of panelling the walls with scagliola was unprecedented in fashionable London interiors







to have a free-standing house in the centre of London was remarkable. Its Bath stone façades rose from a rusticated base and each was articulated by a central projecting pediment. Internally, the Duke's apartments were set above a basement at a raised ground level and, above these, on the first floor, were ranged the state apartments, including a gallery about 150ft long. These were to be approached up a massive central stair hall lit from above by a skylight. For all its complicated later history, this essential plan never changed.

## 6 No interior in Georgian London could have prepared the visitor for the final result, which explodes beyond the entrance 9

With the shell complete, work began to the furnishing of the interior, but this work was, in turn, interrupted by the death of the Duke on January 5, 1827. The expense of the house added a layer of complication to his already hopelessly involved affairs. Its cost was originally estimated at \$80,000, of which the Duke had actually spent \$65,000. However, the tradesmen's claims ran to \$91,000 and the Treasury refused to pay the balance, so the incomplete house stood as an embarrassing testimony to royal profligacy and bankruptcy.

After entertaining various proposals for the building, the King was eventually persuaded to lease it to the Marquis of Stafford, who took possession on February 14, 1828. The Marquis was perhaps his richest subject, with an annual income of about \$200,000. He occupied the neighbouring property of Bridgewater House and was initially interested in the property as a residence for his eldest son, Earl Gower, and his wife. In the event, however, he took possession >

Fig 3 top left: The gallery fireplace supported by figures of Architecture and Painting and its ormolu clock of 1836 designed by Crozatier. Fig 4 left: The gallery lantern with Guercino's St Chrysogonus borne by Angels. Fig 5 right: The rehung gallery





of it for himself and the property became Stafford House. Then, apparently at the suggestion of his son, he employed the two Wyatt brothers to complete the building.

For the next 18 months, work went forward again at a rapid pace. The outstanding creation of this phase of the work was the staircase hall (Fig 2), modelled on Louis Le Vau's Escalier des Ambassadeurs at Versailles of 1672-9 (destroyed in 1752). Work to this extraordinary interior had already begun, but Wyatt now adapted the designs. William Croggon, who had been commissioned to produce imitation marble or scagliola for the original design was forced to sell on his completed pieces to the Marquis at half price. Nevertheless, the bill for the remainder of his work between 1828 and 1829 came to the staggering sum of £7,000 (COUNTRY Life, April 1, 1993).

#### 6 On one visit, Queen Victoria famously quipped that she had come "from my house to your palace" 9

No existing interior in Georgian London could have prepared a visitor for the final result—which explodes beyond the broad entrance lobby (Fig 6)—or for its style. As with all the rooms in the house, this was an essay in an entirely new English fashion inspired by the French Baroque and evocatively described by Wyatt as the 'style of Louis XIV'. In its early English manifestationsas at Wrest Park or Wyatt's concurrent work in 1828-30 to the Waterloo Gallery at Apsley House for the Duke of Wellington—it drew on printed architectural treatises and its early popularity was bound up with the afterglow of the Napoleonic Wars.

Small surprise, therefore that Lord Stafford's auditor, James Loch (celebrated in posterity as the ruthless instigator of the Highland clearances on the Sutherland estates), wrote on June 25, 1829, to congratulate Wyatt on 'the entire magnificence of the finest thing certainly of the kind in Europe'.

Despite such vast investment, the interiors of the state rooms remained



incomplete when the Marquis of Stafford—recently created 1st Duke of Sutherland—died on July 19, 1833. Wyatt was keen to complete the work, but the new Duke, possibly for reasons of economy, forced the architect into partnership with none other that the first (and unsuccessful) architect of the Duke of York's house, Sir Robert Smirke (knighted in 1832).

The probable incentive for this was Smirke's reputation for reliable work within budget. Wyatt, who had now also fallen out with his brother, was compelled into this unhappy working relationship, taking responsibility for the state apartments on the first floor.

Fig 6: The broad, low entrance lobby exaggerates the volume of the hall beyond— a device also used by Wyatt in his designs for the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, of 1810–12

Smirke worked on the addition of an attic storey to the building to accommodate the new Duke's family (*Fig 1*) as well as the creation of a new kitchen.

What neither architect perhaps realised was that a third figure had also invisibly joined the project. By 1833, the young and well-travelled architect Charles Barry had entered into the lives of the 2nd Duke and Duchess of Sutherland. They were clearly slightly dazzled by him and he was commissioned in 1833 to rebuild their English seat at Trentham, Staffordshire. From this time forward, it is clear that Barry offered advice on Stafford House.



To complicate matters further, the Duke and Duchess continuously had new ideas or purchased items they wished to incorporate in their buildings. At one point, it was even proposed to install copies of Lorenzo Ghiberti's *Gates of Paradise* from the Baptistery at Florence in the gallery of the house.

Eventually, the frictions caused by these arrangements came to a head over the design of the gallery skylight. The Duke disliked the form of that created by Wyatt and asked him to change it. Wyatt refused and then resigned in June 1838, when Barry supplied a replacement (Fig 4). Smirke also ceased to be involved from

1840. In the year prior to that, Barry took responsibility for completing the last interiors—the State Dining Room, Gallery and ground-floor dining room. They stood complete in January 1842.

Adorned by the Sutherlands' superlative picture collection, Stafford House became the perfect backdrop for the glittering and fulsomely staffed social life of the house over the next 70 years. Famously, Queen Victoria quipped on one visit in the 1840s that she came 'from my house to your palace'.

The life of Stafford House as an aristocratic town house came to an end, however, in 1912, when the Duke of Sutherland sold the remainder of his

lease. This could have been the moment at which this great building was lost, but Sir William Lever, later 1st Viscount Leverhulme, a self-made man and avid art collector, purchased the lease for \$60,000.

His intention was to turn the building into a public museum and he was persuaded to make it available to the London Museum, then temporarily housed in Kensington Palace. In return for the offer that the building could be used 'for the entertainment of distinguished visitors in London', the Government agreed to pay for the running costs of the museum in addition to transferring the collection to its new home. Sir William surrendered the lease to the Crown to close the agreement, only requesting—as a proud Lancastrian—that its name was changed.

Lancaster House proved a popular —if eccentrically organised—museum, but its operation was interrupted for a short period during 1916–9 and then permanently from 1943 by the exigencies of war. In the aftermath of the Second World War (during which the building suffered bomb damage), its location and grandeur, as well as the precedent for its use by government, made it an ideal location for state and diplomatic entertainment.

To this end, the building underwent a major restoration from 1952, which was enthusiastically described in Country Life on November 12 the following year. Lancaster House consequently played a significant role as the setting for diplomacy through the years of the Cold War and the Commonwealth settlement.

It was in extension of this important role that Lancaster House became home to the so-called British Business Embassy during the 2012 Olympics, during which time, it was largely hung with contemporary British art. In the aftermath of this event, it was decided to re-present the house with a new combination of contemporary and historic pictures from the Government Art Collection.

As part of this process, overseen by Julia Toffolo, the decision was taken to evoke the historic hang of the gallery (Fig 3 and Fig 5) as recorded in three 1848 paintings by J. D. Wingfield (two of which today hang in the building) and a set of 1890s photographs by Bedford Lemere. Now, officials and politicians from around the world can experience once more the impact of this palatial interior, widely regarded by their 19th-century predecessors as one of the finest rooms in London.

## Days of mud and merriment

Despite modernisation, the amateur sport of point-to-pointing still holds true to its foundation in hunting, reflects the Corinthian spirit and offers a great family day out. With the season getting under way, **Brian Armstrong** reports

OINT-TO-POINTING, the muddier amateur arm of steeplechasing that remains closely allied to the hunting field, is still recognisable as the dashing sport first enjoyed by soldiers, dukes, young blades and farmers' boys some 140 years ago. Despite a significantly more professional approach to safety, fitness and qualifications these days—fences are standard brush rather than built of local materials, horses are far more expensive, jockeys weigh far less and are more accomplished and trainers can actually make their

living from what used to be a farmer's hobby—the local hunt's annual point-to-point remains a hugely enjoyable family day out. Children can roam safely free-range, dogs are welcome (on leads), betting is fairly homespun and the picnic is still king.

Whether it's a freezing February day on Salisbury Plain—think whisky mac, sausages in a Thermos and upturned collars or an Easter Monday in Cornwall picnic rugs, beer tents and cold-beef sandwiches—point-to-pointing, often in glorious rural settings, with hunt staff acting as loose-horse catchers and flat caps the uniform, still bears more than a passing resemblance to the way 20th-century sporting artists Snaffles and Munnings depicted it (apart from the cars).

The sport originated in Ireland from cross-country chases in which horses were raced from point to ascribed point in the parish—or from steeple to steeple. In 1752, a Mr Edmund Blake is said to have challenged his neighbour, a Mr Cornelius O'Callaghan (amateur jockeys are still titled Mr), to race some  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles across country

What a spectacle: the crowd enjoys the men's open race at the Berkeley Hunt's meeting at Woodford, Gloucestershire



from the church at Buttevant to Doneraile church in Co Cork, jumping any obstacles—stone walls, hedges, ditches and gates—that lay in their way. Keeping the church steeple in sight (hence the term steeplechasing, used for National Hunt racing) enabled both riders to see the finishing point.

The first race to be billed as a 'point-to-point'—like most equestrian sports, it was begun by the military—didn't come about until 1874, when the 9th Queen's Royal Lancers staged a contest in Yorkshire. Nowadays, all point-to-point meetings are organised by hunts or hunt clubs and horses qualify by doing at least four days' hunting in the current season. Similarly, all the amateur jockeys need to gain a qualification certificate from the Point-to-Point Authority (PPA).

There are more than 100 courses throughout the UK, many of which are located in picturesque parkland settings surrounding great country houses, such as Garnons in Herefordshire, where the grounds were laid out by Humphry Repton; Friars Haugh in the Scottish Borders, which is overlooked by Floors Castle, seat of the Duke of Roxburghe; Berkeley Castle

in Gloucestershire; Tabley Hall in Cheshire; Flete Park in south Devon; and the National Trust-owned Holnicote Estate on Exmoor in Somerset.

Prize money remains modest, although often accompanied by a bottle of whisky, a bag of horse feed or a set of antlers; it's the sheer thrill and personal satisfaction that count. Leading National Hunt trainers Philip Hobbs and Paul Nicholls, who have won millions between them, can often be spotted having a busman's holiday at a Sunday point-to-point in which their daughters are riding. Leading bloodstock agent David Minton and world number one eventer William Fox-Pitt are also regulars.

6 Prize money remains modest, although often accompanied by a bottle of whisky or a set of antlers Those who adore it come from all walks of life, including the Royal Family, who have supported point-to-pointing for a century. The Duke of Windsor rode 13 winners and Braes Of Mar provided the Queen Mother with the last of her 450-plus winners on the track in the 2002 VWH members' race, before carrying her daughter's colours in three races. The Princess Royal's Willowpattern won at Larkhill in 2009, trained by her daughter, Zara Phillips, who campaigned a string of 10 pointers in 2014, including Badbury Rings winner Calusa Comet.

Robert Waley-Cohen, chairman of Cheltenham racecourse and owner of 2011 Gold Cup winner Long Run, credits point-to-pointing for his entry into racing. His proudest moment in the sport came last May, when he saddled four winners from four runners, all ridden by his son, Sam, who runs dental practices, at their local Warwickshire hunt meeting at Mollington, Oxfordshire.

'Everything stems from my first race ride near to my Exmoor family home in 1974,' says Robert. 'I derived enormous fun from being able to play as a poor participant. Nowadays, I love the informality and friendliness ➤





#### 'My bottle's intact—it'll be the weight that stops me'

H ARRY WALLACE (right), 34, has combined a day job with race riding, both under Rules in military races and on the point-to-point field, for many years. He left The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery in 2013 and is now a parttime saddler and tailor (he makes his own breeches).



He keeps two horses

at the yard of his girlfriend—New Zealand eventer Lucy Jackson—in Oxfordshire. One, he hopes to contest the Melton Hunt Club Ride on; the other, 'a precious chestnut, who grew too big for racing on the Flat in Spain', has been qualified for point-to-pointing with the Fernie. 'He's used to temperatures about 25° warmer and is prone to mud fever, but we're on top of that now. It's helpful being able to exercise them with Lucy's four-star horses, to build them up and do jump schooling and gridwork—it's not all about going flat out at the fence.'

He loves point-to-pointing because it's 'the grass roots of racing' and for its traditional link to hunting ('getting the horses used to jumping upsides other horses in the hunting field is really important'), but concedes that weight is an issue. 'I'm naturally quite heavy. I have to lose up to two stone for military races, so I run every day and don't eat a lot.' He's also built a homespun mechanical horse out of a blue plastic drum to practise race riding on. 'My bottle's still intact—it'll be the weight that stops me.' **PL** 

*Above:* End-of-season party at Umberleigh, Devon. *Below:* Steeple-chase: the Grafton ladies' open at Whitfield, Northamptonshire



of the day. It's a seriously good sport, everyone has a good chance of success and it's a great training ground for owners, trainers, riders and officials. It's wonderful to see future superstars—Gold Cup winners See More Business, Cool Dawn and Best Mate all started in point-to-pointing.'

Charlotte Budd (*née* Brew), who, at the age of 21, became the first woman to ride in the Grand National, in 1977, caught the bug after her parents bought her Barony Fort for £1,000 for her 18th birthday. 'I trained him myself. Everyone helped and I learned on the job,' she explains. 'He provided my first winner 40 years ago, won the East Essex hunt race four years out of five and finished fourth in the Aintree Foxhunter, which qualified us for the National, where we got as far as the 26th fence. It was just fabulous to be involved.'

Mrs Budd now combines training two pointers with running her own catering business at Enmore in Somerset. 'I love the camaraderie and us small producers love beating the big yards.'

Doing a night shift driving a milk-collection tanker to farms all around Cumbria enables Wigton farmer Mark Hughes to train his horses, such as Special Portrait, a winner at Cheltenham's prestigious Hunter Chase Evening in May 2012. 'I start my shift at 4pm and get home from work between 2.30am and 4am, so my wife, Denise, and I train the horses in the mornings and early afternoons,' explains Mr Hughes. 'I've been mad keen on hunting and racing since my mother, who died when I was seven, insisted my father taught me how to ride. We don't have much time for anything else, but we put our hearts and souls into the horses.'

For Drew Holmes, the point-to-point world provides a welcome distraction from his high-pressure job overseeing international sales, direction and product placement for fashion designer Nigel Cabourn. 'The beauty of pointing is that it gives an amateur like me the opportunity to be part of the racing world,' says Mr Holmes, 31, who owns, trains and rides four horses in Northumberland. 'My work precludes me from doing it on a full-time basis, although it obviously helps fund

my interest. Riding over fences at speed is a huge thrill and we always have a good picnic, drink and party afterwards—it's Jägerbombs if we win.'

The most important part of the day

#### 10 unmissable meetings

#### **December 14**

#### Ratcheugh Racing Club, Alnwick, Northumberland

Enjoy free entry at this meeting, situated on old turf with sweeping views of the coast

#### February 8

#### **Combined Services, Larkhill, Wiltshire** Features the classic Coronation Gold Cup,

first staged in 1953 in the presence of The Queen, after whom the permanent hospitality complex is named. A big course and a magnificent spectacle, but it can be draughty

#### February 22

#### Countryside Alliance Club (Wessex), Badbury Rings, Dorset

Includes a country fair and children's activities as well as racing. The beauty spot is overlooked by the Badbury Rings Iron Age hill fort, part of the National Trust's Kingston Lacy estate

#### March 7

#### Brecon & Talybont, Llanfrynach, Brecon

An old-fashioned pointing environment two of the fences have drop landings at the foot of the Brecon Beacons, which usually attracts large fields

#### March 7

#### **Duke of Beaufort's, Didmarton, Gloucestershire**

Popular meeting on the Badminton estate with myriad trade stands and a 10-race card that attracted more than 100 runners last year

### April 4 Kimblewick, Kimble, Buckinghamshire

This Easter Saturday fixture draws a massive crowd to a traditional course that celebrated its centenary in 2012

#### April 18

#### **Chaddesley Corbett, Worcestershire**

Features the Lady Dudley Cup men's open, first run in 1897 and probably the season's most prestigious race. A top-class course with fine all-round viewing

#### May 3

#### Fernie, Dingley, Northamptonshire

The four-mile Fernie Gold Cup is always a race to savour. It's a long climb back to the enclosures, but the natural grandstand it offers is arguably the best viewing in the country

#### May 31

#### **Exmoor, Bratton Down, Devon**

The undulating cambers on this moorland course 1,000ft above sea level can change fortunes abruptly. This meeting retains a West Country flavour at the same time as attracting classy title-chasing entrants from up country

#### June 13

### **Torrington Farmers, Umberleigh, Devon**Racing tends to take second place at this end-of-season fixture, where a party

end-of-season fixture, where a party atmosphere prevails

For a full list of fixtures, visit www. point-to-point.co.uk or telephone Talking Point for updates on 09068 446061





## Speaking volumes

Think you know paper sculpture? Think again. Diana Woolf meets Su Blackwell, the artist working by the book

HEN I started out, the term "book art" didn't exist,' Su Blackwell admits. 'Now, there are actual books on it.' She modestly denies she's a pioneer, but there's no getting away from the fact that she started a global trend. In the decade since she began making sculptures out of discarded volumes, her miniature worlds have gone on show on several different continents, and she's been commissioned by Liberty and Thames & Hudson.

Miss Blackwell's career as a book artist began almost by accident—and yet, it seems inevitable that she should have been drawn to this kind of haunting, fragile work. As a child, she was happiest playing in the woods, where she created dens with curtains and carpets from her parents' house and solemnly named the trees. She studied textiles at the Royal College of Art and, after graduating in 2003, she travelled to Thailand—it was there that she found her vocation. Shopping in Bangkok, she came across a beautifully inscribed second-hand book, which fed into her burgeoning interest in the way paper is used in South-East Asian religious ceremonies.

'I was already thinking about impermanence and making the invisible visible, so it seemed natural to start focusing on paper when I got back to London,' she explains. The result was

her first book-cut sculpture. Made from the volume she'd found in Bangkok, it shows moths fluttering free from the pages and was inspired by the Chinese legend of two lovers whose souls re-emerged after death as a pair of moths. Paper, with its combination of fragility and strength, was the perfect medium.

Since then, Miss Blackwell has created more than 150 book-cut sculptures. The motifs she returns to again and again include castles, moonlit forests and small, lonely-looking children or woodland creatures. She's particularly drawn to children's classics—her adult perspective on their themes gives many of her sculptures a faintly menacing feel. The form of each creation is dictated by the book from which it's made, turning it into a three-dimensional reimagining of the original text.

Despite her sculptures' extraordinary, ethereal intricacy, the tools she uses to create them are very straightforward: simply a sharp scalpel and some wire. Utilising the open book as her base, she meticulously cuts out the motifs from individual pages, then gently pulls them upright, supporting them with wire.

Unsurprisingly, Miss Blackwell's favourite commission to date was a literary one, for the Brontë Parsonage Museum in West Yorkshire. 'They just let me loose in the house,' she remembers. The result was a series of sculptures inspired by objects in the collection—Branwell Brontë's toy soldiers are brought delightfully to life, bravely marching out of their fort and abseiling down a chest of drawers. Her largest brief involved a life-sized magical forest scene for the Rose Theatre Kingston's 2011 production of *The Snow Queen*.

Next year, she'll be putting on a solo exhibition in Tokyo, where book sculpture is big. Why does she think it's suddenly taking off? She puts it down to the boom in e-books and digital-reading devices. 'Disturbingly, printed books aren't really worth anything now,' she sighs. 'Shops throw them away by the trolley-load.' But, as her work proves so beautifully, one man's trash is an artist's treasure.'

For more information, visit www. sublackwell.co.uk or telephone 020– 8876 3377



Su Blackwell uses only a scalpel and wire to sculpt her literary reimaginings

62 Country Life, December 10, 2014

## What tycoons' dreams are made of

Steve Moody gets behind the wheel of the brawny Bentley Mulsanne Speed



HEN the Bentley team first got in touch about the Mulsanne Speed, they promised to give me a taste of the life that the average driver of its new flagship vehicle enjoys. Wonderful, I thought. A few days in a Georgian pile with splendid views and easy access to a grouse moor, a case of Château de Puligny-Montrachet and a highyield investment portfolio.

But although the Mulsanne Speed exudes Palladian grandeur and boasts Crewe ancestry, this is, without a doubt, a car for the global tycoon—which is how I came to find myself behind its wheel in Miami Beach, USA. The firm is doing rather well in America, with sales at record levels. In fact, it's doing well everywhere, from China to the Middle East and even good old Blighty.

Generally, in the western world, car owners like to drive. Further east, they prefer to sit in the back. Given the geographical spread of its customer base, it makes sense that Bentley has decided to cater for both with the Mulsanne Speed.

## This is a car that nudges three tons and has a grille you could barbecue on 9

For those who prefer steering, it has 28bhp more, taking it to a bonkers 530bhp and, at low revs, the 6.75-litre V8 twin-turbo engine dumps the equivalent torque of three Golf GTIs through the rear wheels. Only a Bugatti Veyron has more brawn.

Other Speeds in the Bentley range are blindingly fast and exceedingly loud, making the sort of sound Brian Blessed might if he got Tabasco up his nose, but the Mulsanne is more discreet (in relative terms: this is, after all, a car that nudges three tons with a metal grille you could barbecue on), with barely much more than a couple of little badges to set it apart and some

carbon-fibre trim in the cabin where wood should really be.

We drove down for lunch in the Florida Keys, which is like Calshot Spit in the Solent, but with a bluer sea. And alligators. The most notable thing was that I did very little actual driving. The engine is a force of nature and ushers the Mulsanne along on barely more than a whispery woofle. Now and again, I simply waved a hand where I thought we might go and it headed there.

Next, we made for an empty airfield in the Everglades and tore around it at 175mph with Le Mans racing legend Derek Bell giving tips from the passenger seat. Brave man. Apparently, the Mulsanne Speed goes from 0mph to 60mph in less than five seconds, but such is the luxury in which you're cocooned that I could hardly believe it to be true, despite being surrounded by blurry evidence.

An issue does arise when corners appear. Although the suspension has been beefed up a bit, in order to avoid bringing Mr Bell to an ignominious end in a swamp surrounded by hungry alligators,

#### On the road

Bentley Mulsanne Speed
Price £252,000
Combined fuel consumption
19.3mpg
Power 530bhp
0-60mph 4.8 seconds
In town Get the chauffeur in
In the country Get up front
and give it plenty of welly

In Miami Proves that the

British still do luxury best

I took it very gingerly, as if I were on a wet slip road on the M1. The Speed is supercar-fast, but not supercar-agile.

On the way back to Miami from the airfield, I was forced to languish in the back and drink Champagne from the fridge while fiddling with an iPad on a table that dropped down from the seats. It's all marvellously crafted, but it seems a pricey way to check your emails.

Still, as we swooped past superyachts and impossibly slim, beautiful people, I could certainly see why this remarkable, faintly potty car appeals to people with remarkable, faintly potty lives.

## Ending the year on a high note

T the turn of the year, I am prone to piscatorial reminiscence up here in the glen, my feet on the tackle-room fender, a birchwood fire in the grate roaring like a distant motorway—although I do miss my companion, Mister the lab, recently laid to rest well into his 15th year, wrapped in a plaid like the ancient Gaelic warrior he was.

Last season's highlights included the June day my son, Tom, caught his first bonefish during our trip to southern Cuba. This is a milestone for any fortunate angler and, a quarter of a century on, I can still recall my own initiation—ever since, I have been in thrall to the unpredictability of saltwater flats and the bonedog's sudden sprint through the shallows.

Our first morning had proved fruitless: 'No hungry,' pronounced Popo the guide laconically, as fish after fish spurned our offerings. Clouser minnow, mantis shrimp and chenille crab were ignored. Then, we found a small cay with bones tailing over hard sand and Tom went wading ('Thanks for warning me about the stingrays'), his Crazy Charlie *plipped* nicely ahead of the shoal and his reel was soon sizzling away like a dentist's drill. Returning to the skiff, both men wore fluorescent smiles.

When it was my turn, I was so intent on stalking the quarry



The brothers from Venice proudly display their Perthshire catches

that I waded within feet of a saltwater croc skulking among the mangroves. 'We didn't like to interrupt your concentration,' explained my son, later.

In August, I was able to add another photograph to my rogues' gallery of folk who have landed their first trout here on my Highland lochs, when Magnus brought For me, 2014 produced a salmon season as long and lean as a strip of old *biltong* 



About to go back: the author's big Tweed salmon has raised the bar

his younger brother Ambrose over for an afternoon's casting.

Despite arriving in kilts and deerstalkers, the boys hail from Venice. Magnus sends me postcards detailing the impressive catches he makes from the lagoon there, including mullet that he sells profitably to a local trattoria—pretty enterprising for a lad of 10.

We go through his capacious tackle bag—salmon flies, a casting manual, a box of dry Daddies—and his enthusiasm is a pleasure to share 'How about this one?' he asks, picking out a bead-headed nymph. I shrug

on my waders and we three clomp off down the lawn.

After a few near misses casting off the Laird's Stone, Ambrose (aged eight) lifts into his first brownie and hustles it safely to the net. There is a flurry of excitement, before it's hoisted for their father's camera. Meanwhile, his brother is into a fish on the far bank—it's dived into a morass of wiry weeds and I wade in chest deep, dredge around and another plump trout is hoisted aloft. That makes a brace of pounders they tote





An angler's initiation: the author's son, Tom, with his first bonefish during a trip to southern Cuba in June this year

back to the steading for their high tea and I've enjoyed a memorable afternoon without even wetting a line myself.

For me, 2014 produced a salmon season as long and lean as a strip of old *biltong* and, when I finally took the rod clips off my Land Rover in late November, I had precious few fish to my credit. There was one red-letter autumnal day, however, when eight fish came off the Tweed beat where I was a guest, including two 'firsts'

for a Suffolk couple sharing a rod—a notable achievement. My luck was also in and I grassed a 12lb hen fishing a deep Frances through the Battery pool just in time for a bankside elevenses of damson vodka and a square of bitter chocolate.

After lunch, I was pleased to have the streamy Bridge pool all to myself. I must have run it down a dozen times last autumn with no success, but, on this occasion—as I mended the little

Snaelda tube into that hang just beyond the central boulder—my line went thrillingly tight and I was into a sizeable fish. There ensued some 20 minutes of slogging, head-shaking skirmish against the vigorous current: although confident of my 'stout gut', I was fearful for the hook-hold.

Gingerly, I edged shoreward and coaxed the fish in along the gravel. A tawny, battle-scarred cock, thick-set across the back and kyped like Punchinello, he measured out

at 42in from snout to the inner curve of his tail. Depending on which conversion scale you consult, this suggests a salmon in the 25lb–28lb class—my biggest in a long while. Well, that certainly raises the bar for 2015.

David Profumo caught his first fish at the age of five, and, off the water, he's a novelist and biographer. He lives up a glen in Perthshire



## A trinity of trinities

This year, three historic almshouses celebrate the 400th anniversary of their founder's death in 1614. John Goodall explains the origins of their creation

Photographs by John Millar

ENRY HOWARD, Earl of Northampton, was a figure at the very heart of the Jacobean establishment: Keeper of the Privy Seal for James I, Warden of the Cinque Ports and Constable of Dover Castle to name just a few of his offices. He was also a rather unusual one: a bachelor, religiously suspect—the brother of the Catholic 4th Duke of Norfolk, executed by Elizabeth I in 1572—and an enthusiastic herald and antiquarian. Not least of his amateur accomplishments was an active interest in architectural design.



dedicated to the Holy and Undivided Trinity. Confusingly, all had been established prior to his death. Two stood in the shadow of major medieval castles within his patrimony: one begun in 1609 at Castle Rising in Norfolk for a matron and 12 women and a hospital for 12 men at Clun in Shropshire, founded on May 8, 1607. The third was established at Greenwich,

on the foundation of three almshouses

The third was established at Greenwich, where the Earl had a house and enjoyed the office of Steward of Greenwich Park and Tower (on the site of the Observatory) from 1605. He laid the foundation stone of the Greenwich hospital on his 74th and final birthday in February 1614 and he vested control of it in the hands of the Mercers' Company. This was the largest foundation of the three, supporting 12 poormen from Greenwich and a further eight from Shotesham, Norfolk, the Earl's birthplace.

Almost incredibly, this group of foundations still survives. Indeed, Greenwich has grown, accommodation having been provided since 1885 for the Shotesham section >

Left: Two sisters from the Hospital of the Holy and Undivided Trinity at Castle Rising, Norfolk. The prominent chimney stacks and gatehouse are evocative of grand residential architecture of the period. Below: The kneeling figure of the Earl of Northampton by Nicholas Stone, rescued from his monument at Dover



Central to his political success was the role he played in brokering James VI of Scotland's accession to the English throne in 1603. Indeed, when the King heard of Elizabeth I's death, he immediately sent to Howard a ruby as his 'first token' of goodwill.

Through royal confidence and favour, Howard not only improved his own fortunes, but those of his wider family. He conformed outwardly as a Protestant, despite a Catholic upbringing, and proved a ruthless and inscrutable opponent, his dealings inextricably bound up in mutual self-interest with those of Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury.

One hostile contemporary described him as 'the grossest Flatterer of the World', an accusation echoed in his popular name 'His Majesty's Earwig'. When he died in 1614, he requested burial at Dover Castle. There, following a funeral accompanied by 'Popish ceremonies', a large monument was raised to his memory in the ancient church of St Mary in Castro.

In his will, the Earl declared his Catholicism. He also set the final seal





Above left: The internal courtyard of the hospital at Greenwich. The building is constructed of brick, but was rendered over in the early 19th century. The tower forms the gatehouse overlooking the River Thames. Above right: The outer court of the hospital at Clun

of the community in their own village. The three historic almshouses also occupy the original buildings created for them in the 17th century.

It's an added curiosity that the Earl was almost certainly directly engaged in the design of these almshouses, for he was much involved otherwise in the practice of architecture. He built the great London mansion that became Northumberland House and had oversight of construction

at the vast Audley End, the home of his nephew Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk.

In each case, the heart of the almshouse takes the form of a courtyard enclosed by a series of small houses. This is entered through a prominent gatehouse, a reference to the English tradition of collegiate architecture. There is besides a chapel (that at Clun was rebuilt in 1845) and a common hall. To different degrees, these buildings preserve their 17th-century fixtures and fittings.

The east window of the chapel at Greenwich contains a spectacular array of heraldic and devotional glass. It was probably executed by a Dutch or Flemish glazier. Shown here is a central Crucifixion with the Garden of Gethsemane and the Assumption to either side

Since at least the early 15th century, the idea of creating perpetually endowed almshouses—interchangeably termed 'hospital' or 'house of God' (from the French maison dieu)—was widespread. Such foundations themselves grew out of a yet more ancient tradition of hospitality offered by great households to the indigent. They typically supported symbolically important numbers of the poor, most commonly 12 paupers and a master or Warden after the number of Christ and the Apostles.

These institutions were commonly linked to large houses and entry was usually restricted to those who resided on the landholdings of the owning family. In effect, they were a means of looking after aged retainers at the end of their lives. The Earl's foundations follow directly in this long tradition.

In all sorts of respects, the organisation of almshouses generally was shaped by the practices of great aristocratic households (of which they were effectively an extension). Just like members of a household, the poor in an almshouse received distributions of cloth of specified colour, from which they made clothing. This livery was sometimes marked by a heraldic badge or emblem.

To modern eyes, the most striking of the liveries still worn by the Earl's almsfolk are the red cloaks and pointed hats of the women at Castle Rising. Additionally, the communities of almshouses received food or—increasingly common as time went on—a daily wage (or a combination of both).





 $Above\ right$ : The picturesque livery of the sisters at Castle Rising. Below: One in a series of notices hung in the cloister of the Hospital of the Holy Trinity at Greenwich setting out the regulations of communal life. All the Earl's almshouses were governed by statute

Almshouse life was strictly regulated by statutes or rules. These usually describe standards of behaviour and the daily regimen, of which religious observance always formed a substantial part. Prayer was, indeed, the only formally recognised and purposeful occupation of these communities. The 1621 statutes at Greenwich, for example, state that almsmen are to get up and dress for prayers every day at 6am in the summer and 8am in the winter. Chapel was at 9am, followed by two hours of recreation until lunch at 11am. There was another

The almshouse gates were locked at 5pm in winter or 8pm in summer and the community went to bed at 9pm, following further devotions. Housework and cleaning at Greenwich were organised by rota and, throughout the week, there were other occasional rituals such as 'weekly correction' on Saturdays, in which malefactors were publicly reprimanded for their faults. One such was Cordal Brewster, who was variously admonished in 1621–2 for emptying his chamber pot in the garden, abusing a fellow resident and kicking another in the stomach.

chapel service at 3pm and supper at 6pm.

Today, there are about 1,700 independent almshouses operating across the UK. Collectively, they provide homes for more than 35,000 people. Despite the many changes they have undergone, these

The POOR MEN shall especially devote themselves to the service of GOD and live lovingly together as Brethren ought to do and shall help and cherish one another in sickness and in health.

They shall give all due respect and reverence and be obedient to the WARDEN. Two of the POOR MEN in their turns shall be weekly appointed by the WARDEN to cleanse thrice within that time, and oftener if required, the Chapel Cloyster.

Gallery and Court.

ORD: Cap:16.

of Northampton, almshouse founder, was popularly known as "His Majesty's Earwig"

institutions—both in general and, in particular, at Clun, Castle Rising and Greenwich—remain remarkably true to their original purpose. They also continue to modernise themselves in order to provide appropriate standards of care and support, a difficult undertaking in an ever-changing and demanding legislative environment.

The almshouses at Clun and Castle Rising are both today independently managed and continue to serve their local communities. The latter now offers places to single ladies over the age of 55 with a connection to Norfolk. Priority is given to those either living in the village or locally connected with it. The original 12 single rooms and communal spaces have been reconfigured to create space for a community of six. At Greenwich, a new building was opened in 2007 to create a total of 41 single and double accommodation units, beside a further six

at Shotesham. These are run by the Mercers' Company as part of a much larger portfolio of housing for the elderly.

It is an added historical felicity that the Earl of Northampton is today buried at Greenwich. By 1696, the Church of St Mary in Castro at Dover had grown ruinous and the Mercers' Company decided to rescue both the body of the Earl and his large marble monument from the building. As a result, several seated cherubs (all badly weathered) and figures of the four virtues are distributed round the cloister, but the large kneeling figure of the Earl from the monument appropriately presides over the high altar in the chapel against the backdrop of a magnificent 17th-century window.

Here, 400 years on, the modern community of the Hospital of the Holy Trinity at Greenwich can still confront its founder.

## In pursuit of gods and heroes

Today's collectors of Classical sculpture are following in the footsteps of the noblemen and connoisseurs who made the Grand Tour, explains **Ruth Guilding**, whose major book on the lust for ancient sculptures in the 17th and 18th centuries has just been published



HIS summer, the acknowledged star of the salerooms was an exceptional 6ft-tall 1st-century AD Roman statue of the goddess Aphrodite, dressed in a long diaphanous *chiton* and high-heeled sandals. In an earlier life, she'd belonged to a collection that was one of the marvels of Renaissance Rome, a fabulous assemblage of antique marble statuary created by the brothers Cardinal Paulo Emilio and Federico Cesi for the gardens of the Palazzo Cesi to the west of the ancient city (*Fig 1*).

But, by 1773, the Aphrodite had travelled to Britain in one of hundreds of consignments imported by dealers and Grand Tourists to satisfy the mania for antique statuary that had gripped a generation of builders of Palladian country houses. Here she remained as one of the guardian deities of Robert Adam's Roman entrance hall at Syon House, the Thames-side retreat of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland (*Fig 2*). When sold by Sotheby's, she made more than £8 million and was rumoured to be destined for a fashion designer's art collection in Switzerland.

Until very recently, the high prices attained by such Grand Tour pieces as the Syon House *Aphrodite* meant that only museums could afford them. In 2001, a rather personable stone *Dog of Alcibiades* belonging to Lord

Feversham left its niche in the entrance hall at Duncombe Park in North Yorkshire for the British Museum. The *Discobolus* that was its companion piece for a couple of hundred years has belonged to the Liebieghaus, Frankfurt, since 1989. In 2002, the celebrated *Venus* from Newby Hall in North Yorkshire (*Fig* 6) passed through Christie's sale rooms en route to the gas-rich Emir of Qatar's new national museum for almost \$8 million.

To a new generation of art collectors buying with the proceeds of international finance, oil, gas, and dotcom companies, such prices seem quite modest. Far from falling out of fashion, the market for marble antiquities has recently been entirely reinvigorated and demand is now outstripping supply.

The reasons why these unique and beautiful objects continue to be sought-after by connoisseurs have changed very little over the centuries. When Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel (1585–1646) set out in the early 1600s to become the first English aristocrat to have his own gallery of Classical sculpture, he was profoundly aware of the status and kudos that owning such objects could bring him. Arundel's collection made him famous as the 'father of virtu in England'—the Italian word *virtù* carried connotations of civilised learning and art—and James I, Charles I,

Fig 1: Cardinal
Cesi's antique
sculpture garden
in Rome, painted
by Hendrick van
Cleve III in 1584.
One of the Cardinal's trophies,
a Roman sculpture of Aphrodite,
can be seen in
Fig 2



Rubens and scholars from all over Europe came to Arundel House on the Strand in London to see these marvels for themselves.

As a direct result of these associations, Arundel's fellow noblemen came to regard him as a figure of high moral and political integrity and an honour to his country. Arundel's marbles still preserve his name for posterity in their gallery in Oxford's Ashmolean Museum, with a few more domiciled at Arundel Castle and Wilton House.

For the builders of Palladian country houses who followed Arundel's example in the 18th century, status, kudos and symbolism were



 $Fig\ 2$ : Lady Katie Percy posing to promote her vintage motorcycle company in the Marble Hall at Syon House, which is lined with Classical sculptures collected by the 1st Duke of Northumberland. On the right is Cardinal Cesi's *Aphrodite*, sold at Sotheby's earlier this year

just as important. Antique marble sculptures were fabulously rare commodities encountered by travellers on the Grand Tour in the *palazzi* and villas of the Roman nobility. For these callow youths, fresh from the schoolroom and hunting field, with their schoolboy Greek and Latin ringing in their ears, Classical sculpture spoke to them in the language of entitlement and they were fascinated and covetous. 'I never had any

idea till I came here what a good statue was or what effect it was capable of producing,' wrote Henry Temple, the future 2nd Viscount Palmerston (1739–1802), from Rome on his Grand Tour in 1764.

Part of the attraction was the power exerted by these chilly lumps of antiquity to bring the Classical past into the present. For Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester (1697–1759), and builder of magnificent, costly Holkham Hall in Norfolk, his Roman gods and goddesses were the geniuses of the place, understood by his guests and fellow landowners as representing both the classical Arcadia that he had created within and without its walls and the classical roots of his Whig politics. After a long day's hunting, he would gather with his cronies in his sculpture gallery, to pass the evening in reading Virgil or Horace, 'when the beauty of the language, the

### Focus on the Visual Arts



 $Fig\ 3$ : The 18th Earl of Pembroke with a Roman marble statue of Ceres, which had been sold from the collection at Wilton and was bought back by Lord Pembroke in 2010. It stands on a Roman sarcophagus acquired by the 8th Earl of Pembroke (1656–1733). Its missing lid was recently rediscovered in undergrowth in the park at Wilton

strength, the Justice of Their thoughts for ever glowing with a noble spirit of Liberty, made us forget not only the Pains, but the pleasures of the Day'.

Then and now, the idealised human form, exquisitely carved in white marble, could conjure a Pygmalion's dream of desire. For such collectors as Charles Townley (1737-1805) and William Ponsonby, 2nd Earl of Bessborough (1704-93) in the second half of the 18th century, a few of their sculptures provided them with this kind of covert erotic pleasure. Bessborough owned a famous Venus torso with extremely beautiful buttocks (now sadly languishing in a museum store in Liverpool) and Townley commissioned Joseph Cosway to paint him among his coterie with an exquisite little marble torso of Venus that was his own particular fetish (it is now on display in the British Museum's Enlightenment Gallery).

Publicly, the art collector J. Paul Getty (1892–1976) liked to speak of how his sculptures came alive to him, allowing him to 'transport himself back in time and walk and talk with the great Greek philosophers, the emperors of ancient Rome, the people, great and small, of civilisations long dead'. Privately, he enjoyed the privileges of ownership by touching the bodies of his female statues with the full palm of his hand.

Large, intact antique statues have always been the preserve of those with the deepest pockets, but connoisseurs have also appreciated the smaller and more decorative 'tabletop' antiquities that can reward the sense of touch as well as the eye (*Fig 4*). The archaeologist-cum-sculptor Giovanni Battista

Piranesi (1720–78) understood this perfectly and the stream of exquisite fabrications—small statues, vases and candelabras—that emerged from his marble workshops were quickly disposed of to English milordi such as Lord Palmerston as souvenirs of their travels and engraved for posterity in the folios that he also sold them to furnish their libraries.

The collector Henry Blundell (1724–1810) kept a little assemblage of marble fragments—two feet, a hand and two heads—in his dressing room at Ince Blundell, Lancashire, for his private delectation; he also owned a 'finger restored by Canova', the celebrated neo-Classical sculptor. The melancholy, romantic, William Cavendish, 6th Duke of



Fig 4: Some collectors focused on smallscale sculptures, such as those acquired by Henry Temple, 2nd Viscount Palmerston, which are still on show in the entrance hall at Broadlands, Hampshire

Devonshire (1790–1858) created a shrinelike museum at Chatsworth housing all the marble souvenirs of his travels and associations, including a little female torso from Hadrian's Villa that had been given to him by Canova, whom he described as 'my friend, when he lived'.

The art collector Lorne Thyssen, founder of the Kallos Gallery in Mayfair W1, believes

#### A true connoisseur

Christian Levett (right), until recently the owner of the world's largest commodities hedge fund, and the founder of the Musée d'Art classique in Mougins in the South of France, has been collecting antiquities like a true dilettante for many years now. He enjoys imagining the ancient rooms that his statues once inhabited and revels in their long



provenances. Some were formerly owned by Popes and princes and others are Grand Tour discoveries, such as a Roman cinerary urn that was illustrated in one of Piranesi's books in 1778. He takes particular pleasure in surface and texture, enjoying 'a torso that has very finely carved drapery' or 'a belt or even a sandal'. Mr Levett's collecting is also practical and altruistic, as he owns *Minerva*, the scholarly magazine on Classical art, and supports both the Ashmolean and a doctoral archaeology course at Oxford. In place of a Grand Tour, he's funding a British Museumled project in the environs of Hadrian's Villa and a dig at Hadrian's Wall.



that that the market for antiquities like these is still vastly undervalued. The collector base remains small, he says, because few people now have had the chance of a close encounter with such objects, experiencing them only behind the reinforced plate glass of museums. He's one of a band of new and established dealers operating in

London who serve the modern-day collector with a few hundred or thousand pounds to spare. Jamie Ede, of Charles Ede Ltd, is another—he currently has, for example, a finely carved little 1st century AD Roman head of Jupiter, only  $3\frac{1}{2}$ in high, that would have delighted the connoisseurs of the Society of Dilettanti, a club for Grand Tourists founded in 1734 that still flourishes today.

That Maecenas of the art world Daniel Katz, London's best-known dealer in sculpture, likes to make associations between the sculptures in his private collection, for example, setting a 17in-high figure of the Egyptian falcon god Sopdu from the 4th century BC (Fig 5) alongside a small stone seated figure by Henry Moore, carved

Fig 5 below: Daniel Katz, one of the world's leading dealers in sculpture, has a collection that includes this statue of the ancient Egyptian falcon god

Sopdu

when Moore was gleaning inspiration for the British Museum's holdings of Egyptian art. 'You can mix old and new if the quality is high, but you have to hone your taste', he says.

More than two centuries earlier, Lord Palmerston had

More than two centuries earlier, Lord Palmerston had aimed for the same effect when he set Joseph Nollekens's exquisite little *Boy on a Dolphin* group among his marble antiquities at Broadlands.

At Wilton House, where part of the 8th Earl of Pembroke's huge sculpture collection was sold by the 16th Earl in the 1960s, his grandson, Will Pembroke, the 18th Earl,

now buys back lost sculp-

tures wherever he can,

tory of Wilton's superb art collections for future generations (*Fig 3*).

The sculptures and fragments that have come down to us from the civilisations of

repairing the gaps in the heritage and his-

The sculptures and fragments that have come down to us from the civilisations of Greece and Rome are eyewitnesses of history, the remote Classical past made almost flesh. Eighteenth-century connoisseurs honed their appreciation by candlelight, when the flickering shadows falling on luminous, translucent surfaces created an illusion of life and movement, giving the sense of a direct connection with the ancient world that repaid the cost of such works many times over. Modern buyers who set out, like them, to become collectors and connoisseurs, rather than just investors, share their excitement.

Ruth Guilding's 'Owning the Past: Why the English Collected Antique Sculpture, 1640–1840', was published by Yale University Press in October



Fig 6: The Newby Venus, seen here at Christie's in 2002, having been removed from the sculpture gallery at Newby Hall, North Yorkshire, where it had been on display since the 1760s

### Kitchen garden cook Apples



OMER'S *The Odyssey* refers to apple orchards, but it was the Romans who first introduced sweeter, better-tasting varieties to this country. The double whammy of the Wars of the Roses and the Black Death caused production of apples to decline, until Henry VIII decided to remedy this by having new cultivars planted in his orchard at Teynham, Kent.

More ways with apples

### Toffee-apple crumble with custard (below)

Peel and core five apples, then cut into large chunks. Arrange in a buttered, ovenproof dish. In a small saucepan, melt 100g toffee and 100ml double cream, then pour the mixture over the apples. Rub together 300g flour, 200g butter and 200g sugar until they resemble coarse breadcrumbs. Spread the crumble topping over the apples and bake in a moderately hot oven for 40 minutes. Serve with vanilla custard and toffees on the side.



### Apple, walnut and manchego salad

Caramelise a handful of walnuts in a frying pan with a sprinkling of muscovado sugar. Mix with an apple that you've cut into matchsticks and coarsely grate in 100g of manchego cheese. Add a handful of rocket, drizzle with olive oil and a splash of white balsamic vinegar. Serve with Parma-ham-wrapped grissini (breadsticks to you and me).

There really is nothing like an apple from an English orchard. They're where we really come into our own, the much-maligned British climate proving its usefulness by helping to create especially delicious and sweet specimens. These easy pasties are perfect for nibbling on a winter walk, perhaps with a flask of tea



### Puff-pastry apple pasties with cinnamon and pecans

#### Serves 4

#### Ingredients

300g plain flour 300g butter, cold 150ml ice water 1 teaspoon lemon juice

4 Granny Smith apples 2tspn cinnamon 50g pecans, chopped 100g caster sugar 10g plain flour

1 egg, beaten

#### Method

Preheat your oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4. Line a baking sheet with baking parchment.

Tip the flour and butter into a food processor and pulse so that they come together roughly. Mix the water and lemon juice together, then pour into the food processor. Pulse again briefly. If you're making the pastry by hand, you can use a palette knife to 'cut' the butter into the flour in a mixing bowl, then add the water and lemon juice.

Next, whichever method you used, drop the dough onto a lightly floured surface and gently knead it—don't worry if it looks marbled with butter.

Roll the pastry out in one direction with a rolling pin, then give it a quarter turn and repeat, until you've rolled it out in each direction. Fold each edge into the centre, then repeat the entire process. Fold the edges into the centre one final time, cover with clingfilm and refrigerate for a couple of hours.

Peel and core the apples, cut them into 2cm cubes and toss with the cinnamon, pecans, flour and sugar.

Remove the pastry from the fridge and roll it out into an even rectangle. Cut four circles from it and spoon a dollop of the apple mixture into the centre of each. Brush the edges with the beaten egg. Fold the dough over into a semicircle, pressing the edges together carefully and using a fork to make a pattern around them. Brush the surface with more beaten egg and sprinkle with some caster sugar. Bake for 25 minutes, or until golden and puffed up. Serve hot with custard or ice cream.



Homage to Francis Bacon Isabel, Louis & Michel By **Eleanor Swan** Edition 4 of 9



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### It could always be Worcestershire

Get considerably more for your money in this attractive, centrally located county

HERE'S an air of Flat Earthism about the country-house market at present, with nervous London buyers loathe to venture beyond the Home Counties in their search for a rural idyll, in case they can never afford to return. An hour's travel time from the capital is generally perceived as the absolute limit and the Cotswolds the boundary beyond which no prudent London house-hunter dare go.

### 6A cottage is twothirds the price of one in Oxfordshire

Even in good times, Worcestershire has often been considered a step too far by country-house buyers from the south-east of England, an attitude that Will Kerton of Knight Frank in Worcester finds mystifying, given the county's central location and easy access to the business centres of Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and Oxford.

'Especially when you consider that a farmhouse in Worcestershire probably costs half the price of a similar house in Oxfordshire, a character cottage in Worcestershire is about two-thirds the price of one in Oxfordshire and a Cotswold manor house costs about three times the price of a manor in Worcestershire,' he adds.

Compared with the cost of a family home in London, the amount of bricks



you can get for your bucks in Worcestershire is almost laughable. For instance, a budget of £1.295 million will buy The West Wing (Fig 1), Abbey Manor, near Evesham, through Knight Frank in Stratford-upon-Avon (01789 297735) and Savills in Cheltenham (01242 548000), both towns a mere 15 miles away.

The imposing, 7,000sq ft house represents the major part of a Grade II-listed, Victorian Gothic manor, built in 1816 on the site of the original

Fig 1: The West Wing, near Evesham, is the major part of Victorian Gothic Abbey Manor. £1.295m



Evesham Abbey, which was founded between 700 and 710 and razed to the ground following its surrender to the Crown in 1540. Stone gargoyles reputed to be more than 1,000 years old —were salvaged from the site in the early 19th century and are an arresting feature of The West Wing's entrance hall. Other historic elements include a stone obelisk erected in the grounds by the manor's long-term owners, the Rudge family, to mark the losses incurred during the 13th-century Battle of Evesham and the Leicester Tower, built on the spot where Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, was killed in battle in 1265.

Abbey Manor stands in 30 acres of parkland and woodland, with commanding views across the River Avon towards Bredon Hill and the Cotswold escarpment. In addition to the use of the communal Abbey Manor grounds, The West Wing has its own just over half an acre of peaceful private gardens. The house enjoys the best of the afternoon sun and the sunsets over the surrounding landscape are quite magnificent.

The West Wing has been sympathetically renovated and retains



# Lady Washbourne had a Bourbon prince imprisoned

many striking original features, including the Gothic-style battlements, stonework and arches, the grand reception hall, the fine oak staircase, elegant entertaining rooms and spacious bedrooms.

In recent years, the house—which has five reception rooms, a kitchen/breakfast room, master and guest suites, three further bedrooms and a family bathroom—has been run as a top-end country B&B by its enthusiastic owners, who are happy to share their passion for the house and its history with their guests.

Grade II\*-listed Wichenford Court (Fig 2), near Martley, in the picturesque Teme Valley, six miles northeast of Worcester, is one of several historic manors currently for sale through Knight Frank's Worcester office (01905 723438). Originally a moated farmhouse listed in Domesday, the court was remodelled by Edward Skinner in 1712, further improved in the 1970s and again by the present owners in the past 10 years.

In medieval times, Wichenford was the seat of the Washbourne family, where, according to Noake's *Guide* to Worcestershire, the redoubtable Lady Washbourne had one of the



Fig 3: Naunton Court, near Pershore, is situated in The Lenches, an area renowned for its blossom trails in spring. £2.15m for the whole estate

Bourbon princes imprisoned and executed in 1405, when the Welsh nationalist hero, Owain Glyndwr, was making his last stand against the English on nearby Woodbury Hill.

Wichenford Court stands at the end of a long drive surrounded by its outbuildings and 6.4 acres of formal gardens, grounds and paddocks. The house is exceptionally well proportioned and has some 7,000sq ft of accommodation on three floors, including four reception rooms, a study, a large kitchen/breakfast room and five first-floor suites, with a sitting room, two further bedrooms and two bathrooms on the second floor.

Knight Frank quote a guide price of \$1.7m for the main house, gardens and outbuildings, along with a cottage, stabling and a swimming pool. The adjoining 13½ acres of paddocks are

offered separately at £150,000 and an extensive range of traditional barns with potential for development is available for a further £500,000.

They also quote a guide price of \$2.15m for striking, Grade II-listed, black-and-white Naunton Court (*Fig* 3) near Pershore, east Worcestershire, which sits in some 28 acres of gardens and grassland, in an area of rolling countryside known as The Lenches, famous for its blossom trails in springtime.

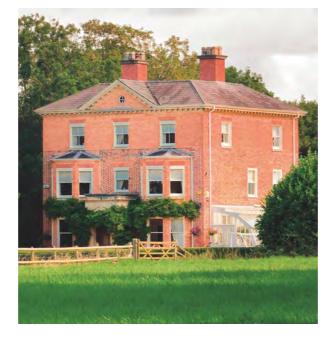
Naunton Court is thought to date from the 1600s and was the home of many generations of the Lyttelton family, who were county notables.

The main house boasts 5,802sq ft of impressive living space, including four reception rooms, a study, a kitchen/breakfast room, eight bedrooms and five bathrooms.

### A choice country seat

S the founder of one of Worcestershire's most prestigious estate agencies and a former High Sheriff of the county, Andrew Grant has crossed the threshold of every grand house in the area. Given that country-house prices there are still some 20% lower than 2007 levels, he can't understand why the owner of, say, a £10 million house in London, would not seize the opportunity to downsize slightly in the capital and buy a fine, well-placed country seat such as Napleton House, near the ancient Saxon village of Kempsey, four miles from Worcester, eight miles from Pershore and nine miles from Malvern.

Built in the early 18th century, reputedly on the site of a Roman



villa, the classic Georgian house was remodelled in Victorian times and owned at one time by the Marquess of Blandford. It stands in a magical private setting overlooking glorious countryside and the Malvern Hills.

The Worcester office of Andrew Grant (01905 734735) quotes a guide price of \$1.895m for this carefully renovated, unspoilt period gem, set in more than 20 acres of gardens and grounds, with some 7,750sq ft of accommodation on four floors, including four main reception rooms, a conservatory, an orangery, a kitchen/breakfast room, seven bedrooms and six bathrooms.

It comes with planning consent to build a stable block and manège and to convert the coach house into a detached four-bedroom house.



### Leaving on a jet plane

Arabella Youens seeks out homes for those desperate for winter sun-but on a budget of \$1 million



#### ↑ Kenya, \$1.5 million (£952,790)

Coco Loco, Malindi

5 bedrooms, courtyard pool, 2-bedroom apartment, 2 acres Knight Frank (00 254 727 099 364)

Knight Frank's Nairobi office is selling this traditional-style Arabic house with a pretty courtyard pool in its centre. Situated right on the beach in the Mabrui suburbs of the popular coastal resort of Malindi, it also comes with a twobedroom apartment in the Blue Marlin Beach complex that has access to resort facilities

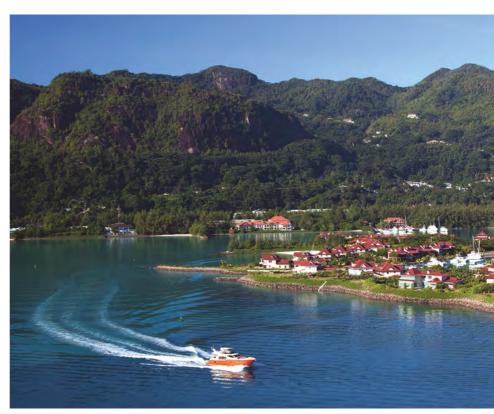


### ↑ Miami, \$1.6 million (£1.02 million)

Braganza Avenue, Coconut Grove 3 bedrooms, pool, garden

One Sotheby's Realty (00 1 786 277 7539)

This contemporary house has vast floor-to-ceiling glass walls. Outside, the garden is shadowed by the tropical hardwood hammock and giant bamboo that are prevalent in this district of the city. Inside, the house has been fitted out with top-of-the-range gadgetry







### ↑ British Virgin Islands, \$950,000 (£606,113)

Eternity House, Tortola

2 bedrooms, pool, 0.79 acres

Knight Frank (020-7861 1097)

Set within a private estate, the main house has an eat-in kitchen, living room and master bedroom. On the other side of the swimming-pool terrace is a separate quest cottage. Each room enjoys unobstructed views of the neighbouring islands



Sugar Cane Ridge, Royal Westmoreland 4 bedrooms. pool, golf access

Royal Westmoreland (01524 889341) Positioned in the

heart of the Royal Westmoreland estate, just a few minutes' walk from the club house, tennis courts and gym, is this semidetached villa. It comes with its own pool and terrace and the house is 2,500sq ft, boasting high,

vaulted, pickledpine ceilings



### ← Seychelles, from \$1.8 million (£1.149 million) Eden Island, Mahé 4 bedrooms, mooring, garden Savills (020–7016 3740) A four-bedroom

maison within this residential marina development, which lies just off the coast of Mahé, the main island, it comes with its own mooring. Larger yachts-including supervachts-can be accommodated in the Eden Island Marina. A swimming pool can be added as an optional extra



#### ↑ South Africa, £1.008 million

Camps Bay, Cape Town 4 bedrooms, pool, garage Savills (020–7016 3740)

This contemporary home overlooking the popular Camps Bay suburb of Cape Town is in excellent condition and is ready for the new owner to move in. It has a large living area that leads onto the pool terrace and garden. The kitchen has a sleek finish and leads out to a small rear garden

### **↓** Morocco, €1.2 million (£952,400)

Dar Touge, Marrakech 4 bedrooms, pool, 7½ acres Aylesford International (020–7349 9772) This traditional Moorish single-storey house looks out over the beautiful Atlas Mountains. All the rooms lead off from the central atrium and there's a large, fully fitted kitchen. It's a 20-minute drive from the centre of Marrakech



### ← British Virgin Islands, \$1.25 million (£797,753)

Cane Garden Bay, Tortola 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, garden Knight Frank (020–7861 1097) The focus of this beachfront house is on the great room, which features a well-equipped kitchen and living area that overlooks the shore. The spacious patio is open to the sea and leads down to the sand. Shops and restaurants are a short walk away



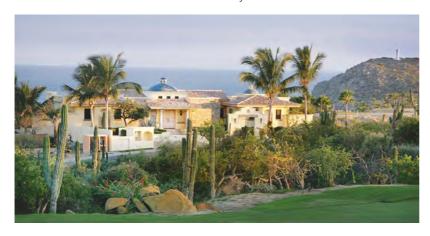
#### ↓ Mexico, \$1.695 million (£1.082 million)

Villa del Amor, Los Cabos

4 bedrooms, pool, Jacuzzi, garden

Abercrombie & Kent International Estates (020-3667 7016)

Part of the Cabo del Sol estate, on the southernmost tip of Baja California, Villa del Amor looks out over the Sea of Cortez. It's a 10-minute walk from the beach and, for the villa's owner, benefits include access to the Cabo del Sol's Golf Clubhouse and other amenities at the nearby Sheraton Hacienda del Mar





↑ Cayman Islands, \$1.6 million (£1.019 million)

Beachfront, Little Cayman

4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, 2.1 acres

Hamptons International (020–3151 7276)

This beachfront house sits on the north side of Little Cayman and enjoys fantastic ocean and sunset views. The house is surrounded by a wraparound deck and has a garage

### You must remember this

One of the most recognisable of film props is a star again in New York, a personal view of the Charge of the Light Brigade intrigues and royal connections still count

AN a film prop be a star? Genevieve, obviously, and surely the tiger skin in Dinner for One (the superb Freddy Frinton and May Warden farce that is a cult in much of the world, but not, inexplicably, Britain), the red shoes in both *The* Wizard of Oz and the eponymous Powell and Pressburger, the statuette in The Maltese Falcon, Jennifer Lawrence's bow and arrows and many others deserve to be above the title. For many people, however, the greatest inanimate star of them all must be the upright piano centrestage in Rick's Café Américaine in Casablanca (Fig 1).

Not only is it 'played' during much of the film, not just for As  $Time\ Goes\ By$ , but it is integral to the plot as the hiding place of the vital laissez-passer documents. There was a second piano in Casablanca, but that was only an extra, seen in a brief flashback.





Fig 1 above left: Glass praising the Duke of Cumberland. £6,875 Fig 2 above right: The 9in-high, Jacobite Hay Goblet. £2,000 Fig 3 below: Piano featured in Casablanca, including a piece of gum possibly chewed by Dooley Wilson. \$3.07 million (£1.96m)

Two weeks ago, Bonhams New York held a film-memorabilia sale in which the original *Oz* Cowardly Lion costume sold for \$3.07 million (£1.96m), but, in its day, that had to share its billing with the Tin Man and the Scarecrow; the piano rightly took the honours at \$3.4 million (£2.17m).

The 'documents' were sold separately, for \$118,750 (£75,788). Such is the associative value of the film that the other piano, extra that it was, was sold by Sotheby's two years ago for \$602,500 (£384,460).

As Sam, Dooley Wilson, a singer and drummer, mimed the playing, which was actually performed by Elliot Carpenter, out of shot, but in view for Wilson to follow his hand movements. Both pianos in the film have 58 keys, 30 fewer than on conventional modern pianos and

the strings and sounding boards are shorter as well.

The star had a hidden extra, a piece of ancient chewing gum stuck beneath the keyboard, which may possibly have been masticated by Wilson. It even retained a fingerprint, but the vendor had been unable to find one of Wilson's for comparison. That would have been the ultimate provenance.

Although no fingerprint, an old label on the base of a wine glass offered at Bonhams in London suggested a strong provenance and association value. This was perhaps the star lot in a fine sale of British glass that included several important collections. The 9in-high Hay Goblet (Fig 3) is a very superior Jacobite glass, engraved with the rose and thistle and a crown above the initials J H. According to the label, it was: 'One of a pair, stated to have been the gift of Prince Charles to his treasurer and secretary John Hay who served throughout the 1745 campaign, was major-domo of the Household & went with Charles to Rome in 1766, created a baronet & left Charles' service in 1768, Dec. 8th. Both glasses chp'd.'

There is no other evidence that it was a direct gift from Charles Edward to Sir John Hay of Restalrig (1708/9–81), but it does seem likely, and it sold for \$8,750, but most of several more Jacobites in the sale were bought in. The chips, incidentally, were minor and on the foot; it would be interesting to know whether the pair survives.

Jacobites, which mostly date from after the '45 and have been much faked, are more commonly met with than Williamite and Hanoverian glasses. One here, engraved with a mounted King Billy and 'To the Glorious Memory' sold for \$2,000 and a glass in praise of Charles Edward's oppo-

nent at Culloden, the Duke of Cumberland, sold for £6,875 (*Fig 2*). This was a 6½in-high bell-shaped glass with a bust portrait of the Butcher in armour. Presumably, the catalogue dating to 1730 was a mis-type—he would have been nine or 10—and the likeness copied either from the medal by Martin Holtzhey or the wax profile by Isaac Gosset, which would put it in the early 1750s.

A later campaign was vividly recorded in another Bonhams sale on the same November day. Captain William Thomas Markham was a member of one of the most interesting 18th- and 19th-century British extended families of amateur artists. He illustrated the title and frontispiece of his journal for 1854–5 (*Fig 4*), when he was ADC to Sir George Brown, commander of the Light Division, when he bound it up later.

Together with 30 or more letters to his parents, it provides a lively account of the battles of the Alma, Inkerman and Balaclava. Of the first, in which he was warmly involved, he writes modestly that it 'only relates my story of the battle, as I saw it, & every one probably has a different view'. He also records encounters with Florence Nightingale,

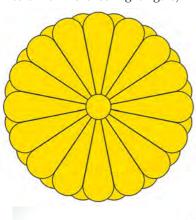




Fig 4: Campaign journal of Capt William Thomas Markham, covering 1854-5, illustrated by him. £2,375

Alexis Soyer, W. H. Russell of *The Times*, Lord Raglan and Roger Fenton. His account of the Charge of the Light Brigade—'the most daring charge ever heard of'—corrects Tennyson's numbers: 'Out of 800 who charged, only 200 returned to muster.' This seemed cheap to me at \$2,375.

The Japanese have a system of *mons*—family and other crests—that works very much as in European heraldry. They might be used on textiles or, as in the West, to proclaim ownership of carts, coffers and the like. Two of the best known are the

Fig 5 left and Fig 6 below: The kiku-mon or chrysanthemum (left) and kiri-mon or paulownia leaves (below)

Imperial *kiku-mon* or 16-petal chrysanthemum and the *kiri-mon* or paulownia leaves used by the Japanese government (*Fig 5 and 6*). The *kiku-mon* was declared the proprietary *mon* of the imperial family by law in 1869 as part of the Meiji restoration of imperial power.

Last month, Dukes of Dorchester sold an impressive 30½ inhigh by 66½ in-long *makie* lacquer coffer decorated with gold dragons on a red ground for £27,176 against an estimate of £6,000, no doubt because of the Imperial *mon* on the brass lock.

Next week Dry bones come up to snuff

### Pick of the week

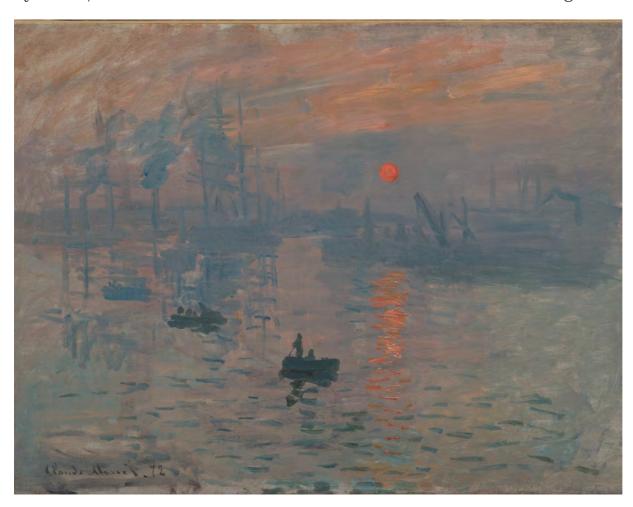
The ugliest lot of recent—even contemporary—sales must surely be the marble head of a slave, Destino, Volonta di Potenza (Destiny, Will to Power) by Adolfo Wildt (1868-1931) that sold for £55,250 at Christie's South Kensington recently. It seems to have been part of the installation at the 1911 Rome International Exhibition by the Croat Ivan Mestrovic (1883-1962). It was intended to express the will of the Slav peoples to freedom, and was powerfully ugly.



Alan Cotton/Alamy; Zoonar GmbH/Alamy

### Impression of Monet

Huon Mallalieu relishes an opportunity to visit the Paris house-museum filled with works by Monet, one of which is the focus of an exhibition dedicated to the origins of Impressionism



Left: Despite giving rise to the term Impressionism, Impression, soleil levant (Impression, Sunrise). Monet's painting of Le Harvre, was all but forgotten for decades after he painted it in 1872. Below: Painted in the same year, Intérieur's spontaneous, loose brushstrokes, informality and vibrancy of light mark **Berthe Morisot** as one of the forerunners of the movement

HE Musée Marmottan, in the 16th arrondisement between the Jardins du Ranelagh and the Bois de Boulogne, is one of the lesserknown pleasures of Paris. Originally the *hôtel* of Jules Marmottan and his son Paul, who left the house and their First Empire collections to the Académie Française, over the past 60 years, it has been enriched by several magnificent donations, principally from the Monet family. There are now about 100 canvases by Claude Monet in the permanent collection, including several of the most famous, and the museum is linked to the painter's house at Giverny.

The current show, 'Impression, soleil levant', could not be in a better setting. It focuses on the

painting of Le Harvre that provoked the critics to use the term 'Impressionists' as an insult. Although Louis Leroy, with his mocking piece in Le Charivari for April 25, 1874, is usually discredited with coining the term, more accurately, it was the only slightly less sneery Jules Antoine Castagnary who first used it four davs later in Le Siècle: 'If one wants to characterise them with a single word that explains their efforts, one would have to create the new term of "Impressionists." They are Impressionists in the sense that they render not a landscape but the sensation produced by a landscape. This very word has entered their language: not landscape but impression, in the title given in the catalogue for



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M. Monet's Sunrise. From this point of view, they have left reality behind for a realm of pure idealism.'

The show is organised in four sections, each one of which has enough material for an exhibition of its own. The first is devoted to a matter so seemingly obvious that it should not need restatement—that Impressionism did not appear from nowhere, like frogs after a storm. However, given the Tate's current fancy that it must 'challenge the assumption' that Turner influenced the Impressionists, it does still need to be said that he did and, among the precursors, Delacroix, Courbet, Boudin and Jongkind, the curators give us a superb late Turner, Rockets and Blue Lights, and two watercolours. Alas, no Bonington, however. They note the significance of Monet's 1870-1 stay in London in introducing him to Turner and Claude Lorrain.

### **6** Impressionism did not just appear from nowhere, like frogs after a storm 9

The section devoted to Impression, soleil levant (Impression, Sunrise) itself includes impressive detective work using documentary, topographical, meteorological and astronomical evidence to establish exactly when and from where it was painted, confirming it to be a sunrise rather than a sunset, as is sometimes claimed.

Then, we come to that 1874 first Impressionist Exhibition (as it was later termed), evoked by two other notable Monets shown in it, Le Déjeuner and Le Boulevard des Capucines, along with 19 paintings from the collections of *Impression*'s first owners, Ernest Hoschedé and of Georges de Bellio. These



For many years, Monet's Boulevard des Capucines was rated far above Impression

show that, far from occupying a central place in those collections, Impression was underrated and virtually forgotten.

In 1931, Les Tuileries, Le Train dans la neige and especially La Gare Saint-Lazare were the real jewels of the collection and their insurance values were twice that of Impression (200,000 francs against 110,000 francs). When lending them for exhibition, the owners had to insist that Impression went too.

The final section results from more original research and chronicles the painting's wartime adventures. Having been gifted to the Musée Marmottan Monet at the beginning of the German occupation, it was evacuated with the Louvre collections to Chambord, where it was stored without anyone's knowledge for six years.

I would strongly advise anyone

in Paris before January 18 with time for just one exhibition to head for the Marmottan.

'Impression, soleil levant' is at Musée Marmottan Monet, 2, rue Louis Boilly, 75016 Paris until January 18, 2015 (00 33 144 96 50 33; www. marmottan,fr)

#### Next week:

'Art & Soul: Victorians and the Gothic'



Coming to a cinema near you: experience the sheer spectacle of the Met's production of Wagner's Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg

## Merrily on high

# Whether you want to join the Christmas revelry or avoid it, **Geoffrey Smith** has music for everyone

S a true-born daughter of the shires, my wife has never met a tradition she didn't like and Christmas is the high point of her year. The house brims with good cheer, not least in the non-stop strains of carols from her favourite CDs.

Although it's all warm and lovely, I do welcome the occasional relief from this Yuletide soundtrack that's provided by the London concert scene, which offers its usual rich musical array, regardless of season. For instance, the 19th of this month will find me at that bijou treasurehouse Wigmore Hall (020–7935)

2141; www.wigmore-hall.org.uk), where Christian Gerhaher, the reigning master of *lieder*, will be singing Mahler with his regular accompanist, Gerold Huber, after performing the same programme on the 17th.

Indeed, the Wigmore abounds with pre-Christmas vocal splendour. On the 14th, soprano Sophie Bevan presents *Vain Glory*, a recital of songs evoking the diverse experience of the First World War, and the Hilliard Ensemble gives its farewell concert on the 20th. And the plenty continues in the New Year, with the charismatic tenor Jonas

Kaufmann singing Schumann and Liszt on January 4, and the doyen of the piano, Sir András Schiff, celebrating Schubert and Beethoven in recitals on the 9th, 13th and 15th, the last of these with acclaimed British tenor Mark Padmore.

Linked to the season, the Spital-fields Winter Festival (020–7377 1362; www.spitalfieldsmusic. org.uk) continues with Nine Daies Wonder, in which the minstrels of The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments re-create Will Kemp's jig from London to Norwich in 1600, with such exotic Elizabethan gear as the viola bastarda and nyckleharpa. (After Spitalfields on December 10th, the society dances on to Southampton on the 11th and Manchester on the 16th.)

The Festival concludes on the 15th with *This Year's Midnight*, readings for the winter solstice by Simon Callow, accompanied by the viol consort Fretwork.

In north London, Kings Place

sees the year out with an intriguing interactive staging of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* by Opera in Space—promenade Baroque, on the move, with dancing and jazz, December 19–20. And there's more novelty on the 20th, as Nicholas Collon and the Aurora Orchestra perform Fauré's *Requiem* in its original chamber version, with soloists Lucy Crowe and Ronan Collet (020–7520 1490; www.kingsplace.co.uk).

After a welter of Yuletide shows, the Barbican (020–7638 8891; www.barbican.org.uk) welcomes 2015 with a grand rarity: on January 11, Sir Simon Rattle conducts the London Symphony in Schumann's neglected quasi-Persian oratorio, *Das Paradies und die Peri*, with an eminent cast including Sally Matthews and Mark Padmore.

And on the 15th, the Rattle/LSO alliance delivers Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, preceded by Webern, Berg and Ligeti, featuring soprano Barbara Hannigan.



Try something new with *Nine Daies Wonder* featuring The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments

And on the 12th, another stellar combination, tenor Ian Bostridge and pianist Thomas Adès perform Schubert's Winterreise.

After London and Schubert, Mr Bostridge brings a Brahms recital to Saffron Hall in Essex on January 17, accompanied by Graham Johnson (0845 548 7650; http://saffronhall.com). Also taking to the road is the admirable mezzo Sarah Connolly, performing an American programme with the Britten Sinfonia, including songs by Aaron Copland and his ballet Appalachian Spring. They will visit Leeds, Cambridge, London and Norwich, from January 17 to 21 (01223 300795; www.brittensinfonia.com).

January brings special festivity to Liverpool, where the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic is marking both its 175th anniversary and a sparkling refurbishment of Philharmonic Hall. Launching the celebrations in exuberant style on January 3, the Philharmonic accompanies excerpts from Walt Disney's animated classic Fantasia with live music, followed on the 10th by a special performance of Messiah, with French contralto-turned-conductor Nathalie Stutzmann, and soloists including John Mark Ainsley. And on the 14th and 15th, coinciding with the orchestra's actual anniversary, Tamsin Little plays the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto (0151–709 3789; www.liverpoolphil.com).

Back in London, opera fans will, as ever, be celebrating the theatrical glamour and musical virtuosity of Covent Garden (020-7304 4000; www.roh.org.uk). Until December 21, the Royal Opera is offering Christof Loy's updated version of Wagner's Tristan und Isolde, featuring Nina Stemme and conducted by Musical Director Sir Antonio Pappano. From December 18 to January 17, a particularly starry new production of Verdi's Un ballo in Maschera arrives, with tenor Joseph Calleja and baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky.

From January 13 to 24, the Royal Opera moves to the Roundhouse in Camden, NW1, for a cutting-edge take on Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, returning to Covent Garden from January 20 to February 6 for more star power, with David McVicar's new staging of Giordano's *Andrea Chénier*, headed by Jonas Kaufmann and Eva-Maria Westbroek with Maestro Pappano in the pit.

And COUNTRY LIFE's new year will feature a tribute to the invaluable Sir Antonio Pappano, in what has been a remarkable period even by his exalted standards.

Sir Simon Rattle will conduct a rarity at the Barbican

### What's new

'Less is more' was the battle cry of Minimalism, that pithy, hypnotic style that transformed music in the 1970s and 1980s. But **0 IQP DWP 8 QZ USSHG**, the latest year-long in-depth survey at Kings Place, explores the roots of radical simplicity, originating in plain-chant and re-emerging in such composers as Satie and Stravinsky, before dominating the contemporary scene in the work of Terry Riley, Steve Reich and John Adams. Its first weekend, January 7–11, features The Sixteen singing plainsong, Joanna MacGregor playing Satie and the London Sinfonietta performing Mr Riley's seminal masterpiece, *In C (020–7520 1490; www.kingsplace.co.uk)*.

### **Book now**

**&HOELDM1 HZ <HDUIQ9 IHQQD** at Edinburgh's Usher Hall on January 1, with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conductor Nicholas McGegan and tenor John Mark Ainsley, playing and singing Strauss, Léhar and Loewe, repeated on the 3rd in

Perth and the 4th in Ayr (0131–228 1155; www.sco.org.uk)

Or welcome New Year down south, with the %RXULFP RXW.6\P SKRQ. V Johann Strauss Gala, featuring soprano Elizabeth Watts, from December 30 to January 10, in Bristol, Poole, Exeter, Torquay and Weymouth (01202 669925; www.bsolive.com)

The mesmerising team of Gustavo Dudamel (*above*) and Venezuela's **6 IP yQ %RGYDU2 UFKHWD** return to the Royal Festival Hall with programmes of Beethoven, Wagner and Mahler, January 8–9 (0844 875 0073; www.southbankcentre.co.uk)

### Last chance to see

Festivity and humour à *la* Wagner from the Met: ' **IHO HIVMU VIQJHU**relayed live to cinemas on December 13, with James Levine conducting (*www.metopera.org*)

### Give this a miss

- **DP HV 5 KRGHV**, the 'classical pianist with rock-star attitude', has his fans, but the attitude puts me off. He plays Chopin at the Soho Theatre to December 12 (020–7478 0100; www.sohotheatre.com)



### Murder they wrote

A classic detective, a 20th-century Western and the crimes of the past resurface in the present as Michael Murray-Fennell rounds up the latest thrillers

ENGUIN CLASSICS has set itself the task of publishing new translations of all 75 of Belgian writer Georges Simenon's novels featuring his pipe-smoking, beer-drinking Detective Chief Inspector Maigret. In the ninth of the series, A Man's Head (Penguin Classics, £6.99 \*£6.64), Simenon's imperturbable inspector puts his career on the line to rescue a man from the guillotine, a simpleton convicted of a seemingly open-andshut case: the bloody murder of a rich American lady and her maid.

6 Ruth Rendell relegates the police to the sidelines in favour of a number of septuagenarians 9

Maigret pits his wits against a brilliant adversary, a Czech immigrant who, 20 years earlier, would have been an anarchist, but whose ambition in 1930s Paris is to pull off the perfect crime. The detective tracks both the wrongly accused and his eventual quarry through the French capital, from the loading docks of the Seine to the cafes of Montparnasse.

'Paris was wearing the cheerless face it always has in the unlovely days of October. Harsh daylight fell from a sky which resembled a dirty ceiling,' Simenon writes. This is a bleak novel in which, at the end, not even the warm welcome of the inspector's home offers any comfort.

In 2008, Japanese housewife Kanae Minato became a writer and, in Confessions (Mulholland Books, £8.99 \*£8.54), she takes a sharp axe to our idealised



Detective Chief Inspector Maigret (played here by Sir Michael Gambon) returns in 75 new translations of Georges Simenon's novels

conceptions of home and school, youth and romance. Now translated into English, her dark thriller opens arrestingly with a teacher calmly explaining to her charges how she will have her revenge on the two pupils responsible for the death of her young daughter. What follows is a series of admissions told from different perspectives and in different forms—speeches, diaries, final testaments.

As in *Gone Girl*, its American cousin, it all turns a bit too crazy and implausible at the end, but *Confessions* is a gripping portrayal of a society in which adults are too busy to attend to their children and children too alienated to find their moral bearings.

London, Paris, Berlin, Syria, Yemen and Dagestan—Close Call (Bloomsbury Publishing, £12.99 \*£11.69) from Stella Rimington is a globetrotting affair, its action switching from one country to the next as MI5's Counter-Terrorism team—aided, and sometimes stymied, by their French and American colleagues—tries to track the progress of a cache

of arms destined for an al-Qaeda splinter cell somewhere in Europe. As a former Director General of MI5, the author is inevitably compared to former spook John le Carré and, although she's not in his league (but then who is?), as the plot culminates in a Manchester warehouse, she ably ratchets up the tension and certainly shows no sentimentality towards the fate of her heroes.

The discovery of skeletal remains high up in a Victorian Gothic turret in Edinburgh sets some difficult questions for Karen Pirie of Police Scotland's Historic Cases Unit. How did it get there? And why does the skull sport a bullet wound? The answers lie in the Balkans War of the 1990s and Val McDermid's The Skeleton Road (Little, Brown, £18.99 \*£16.99) alternates between the present and the past, from Edinburgh to Dubrovnik and a small village in Croatia with a terrible secret.

In addition to the tenacious Pirie, the cast of characters includes Oxford dons, investigators for an International Criminal Tribune and a Croatian general. It's a knotty tale and fascinating to watch Pirie getting closer and closer to the truth. It feels immediate, too, with references to Edward Snowden, WikiLeaks and a certain recent referendum.

Wayfaring Stranger (Orion, £19.99 \*£16.99) by James Lee Burke is a sprawling American Western that opens with a memorable encounter with gangsters Bonnie and Clyde, then spends some time abroad behind enemy lines in war-torn Germany, before settling into its tale of corruption amid the oil fields of mid-century Texas.

Its hero, Weldon Avery Holland, wishes for 'the moral clarity and violent alternatives' of the 19th-century Wild West and despairs of the bureaucrats, cowards and bullies who have tamed that way of life. Weldon's grandfather, Hackberry Holland, even when confined to bed with a revolver under his pillow, all but steals the show. Half American *noir*, half philosophical rumination on good and evil, *Wayfaring Stranger* reads like it's been pickled in bourbon.

But Ruth Rendell's The Girl Next Door (Hutchinson £18.99 \*£15.99) is the pick of the bunch. Although ostensibly a traditional whydunnit, in reality, it's a cleareyed examination on the pains and perils of growing old. Regrets, loneliness and cancer are the terrors lurking in the shadows here. As with The Skeleton Road, a grisly crime from the past resurfaces, but the author firmly relegates the police to the sidelines in favour of a number of septuagenarians whose childhood memories of the green Essex meadows during the Second World War may hold the solution to a murder.

The main character is an odd one; widower Michael Winwood is half-broken by grief, prone to crying and writes poetry about buses, but, like Inspector Maigret (albeit in his own fashion), he gets his man.

#### **Biography**

#### Elsa Schiaparelli

Meryle Secrest (Fig Tree, £25 \*£20)

IN AN INTERVIEW of March 1960, presenter Charles Collingwood introduced Elsa Schiaparelli-Schiap, as she called herself-as the inventor of Shocking Pink and of Shocking perfume. It was six years after her couture house in Place Vendôme, Paris, had closed its doors, bankrupt.

New stars were in the ascendant, from her protégé, Hubert de Givenchy, whom she admired, to Christian Dior, whom she decidedly did not.

In this engaging new biography, Meryle Secrest brings to life the extraordinary achievements of a woman who revolutionised the world of fashion and design. She invented so much more than the colour for which she is remembered, pioneering the built-in bra, split skirts, wrap dresses, extravagant buttons, decorative zips, metal mesh bags and matching jackets for evening gowns. The Second World War years saw her creative solutions to shortages of material and leather, in the form of reversible coats and practical, deeppocketed Siren suits. 'No matter how bizarre the impulse,' writes Miss Secrest, 'the result was always wearable.'

And the impulse was frequently bizarre. As a child who grew up convinced she was ugly, Schiap once planted seeds in her ears, nose and mouth in the hope that her head would be covered in beautiful flowers. This surreal sensibility would blossom into creative collaborations with Salvador Dalí and Jean Cocteau. She created hats shaped like shoes and lamb chops, booties of monkey fur and extravagant collections on themes ranging from the circus to the zodiac.

Wallis Simpson's trousseau numbered 18 Schiaparelli models, including a white silk-organza gown with an enormous painted lobster, complete with sprigs of parsley.

Drawing on journals of friends and associates as well as Schiap's own memoirs, the author paints a vivid portrait of her subject's colourful life and times. She credits Gaby Picabia-ex-wife of the Dadaist artist-as the deus ex machina who set Schiap on her course, by way of an introduction to the great Paul Poiret. Paris, where Schiaparelli settled, was both fashion capital and magnet to artists in the 1920s and 1930s. She knew them all, ricocheting between decadent parties and the highsociety balls of Comtesse Etienne de Beaumont.

But what is most poignantly revealed in this biography is the gulf between her social and professional success and a personal life unfulfilled. It's summed up by Schiap herself: 'I do not believe for a moment,' she wrote in 1953, 'that women who make tremendous successes of their lives are happy.' Teresa Levonian Cole



Elsa Schiaparelli with Salvador Dalí, with whom she collaborated, in 1949

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### **Books**

#### **Biography**

#### Irina Baronova and the Ballets Russes de Monte Carlo

Victoria Tennant

(University of Chicago Press, £38.50 \*£32.50)

IT READS LIKE a fairy tale. In 1931, a pretty Russian student named Irina Baronova was plucked out of a ballet studio in Paris and thrust into a brand-new company run by a former Cossack. She was 12 years old. Within months, she was dancing leading roles alongside experienced performers and two other gifted teenagers. The three girls were called 'the baby ballerinas'.

After Baronova's death in 2008, her daughter, the actress Victoria Tennant, organised her mother's letters and photographs into this splendid memoir of her extraordinary career. Miss Tennant's straightforward comments tie the chronological narrative together; Baronova's incisive observations flood it with her personality and impudent style.

Although the great artists who inspired her and the ballets that brought her stardom have largely been forgotten, during the 1930s, they sustained classical ballet's finest standards and secured its future.

Five-month tours of one-night stands crisscrossed America and Canada, which had no ballet companies of their own. Dazzling choreography by George Balanchine, Michel Fokine and Léonide Massine attracted the London audience Diaghilev had developed; the 1937 season of this new Ballets Russes broke Covent Garden box-office records.

A natural chameleon on stage, Baronova became ethereal, saucy or dramatic at will, a lyrical swan or a mischievous soubrette. Her interpretive range shines from the photographs in this book and her voice vividly illuminates her private and public history in the world she inhabited with such dedication. 'The first time I had to join a union,' she wrote, 'was with [American] Ballet Theatre [in 1941]... and none of us could understand, how can you be an artist and do creative work and look at the clock all the time?'

When she and her remarkable colleagues represented ballet to the public, artistry produced celebrity, not the other way around. This elegant, informative book documents the path of a memorable dancer from anonymity to international acclaim. Barbara Newman



In the thick of it: Cheltenham winners Charlie Swan and Istabraq

#### Racing

### Cheltenham et Al: The Best of Alastair Down

(Racing Post, £20 \*£18)

**Calling The Horses** 

Peter O'Sullevan (Hodder & Stoughton, £25 \*£22.50)

Little Book of Cheltenham

Catherine Austen (G2 Entertainment, £9.99 \*£9.49)

ALASTAIR DOWN is the most stirring racing writer since Lord Oaksey, able to evoke effortlessly the pulsating heroism of a desperate finish and the courage and colour that typify the industry. There is also no better man at the moving tribute.

Of the late trainer Capt Tim Forster, famously pessimistic and conservative, he wrote: 'Look for him on a day when the ground rides heavy at Towcester and some old hero is having to dig deep for courage up that hill.' He penned this about the much-loved grey steeplechaser Desert Orchid: 'There was something of the thumping tart about him, an almost ludicrously flamboyant jumper, he was Errol Flynn gone equine, superstar and swashbuckler.'

Mr Down can be angry and coruscating, describing corporate-hospitality guests as 'a strange sub-species, having a day out courtesy of Krummi Karpets' and he's shameless about the *après*-racing—look out for his alternative 'marathon', a 26-pint pub crawl.

The venerable commentator Sir Peter O'Sullevan features often in Mr Down's writings, because, until 1997, when he retired aged 79, his hoarsely excited tones were as integral to the racing landscape as hats at Ascot. His autobiography *Calling The Horses*—such household names as Arkle, Nijinsky and Red Rum—has been updated to cover the later charitable works to which he is now devoted.

Some of Sir Peter's most memorable vocal heroics were at Cheltenham, the racecourse where the heart of National Hunt racing beats loudest. The Little Book of Cheltenham is packed with reminders of heroes past and present, from Golden Miller to Kauto Star, Fred Winter to A. P. McCoy, and is the ideal Christmas stocking filler. Kate Green

### Recent books on a railway theme

### The English Railway Station

Steven Parissien (English Heritage, £25 \*£22.50)

### Britain's Lost Railways: The Twentieth-Century Destruction of our Finest Railway Architecture (updated edition)

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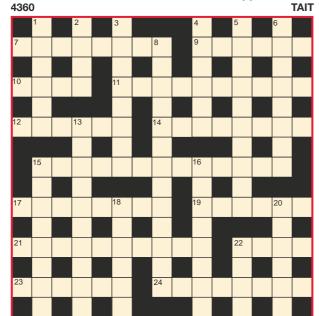
A prize of £15 in book tokens will be awarded for the first correct solution opened. Solutions must reach Crossword No 4360, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE10SU by **Tuesday, December 16**. UK entrants only.

#### ACROSS

- 7. Reprimands about interruption to survey (8)
- 9. Introductions right in verses (6)
- 10. Writer Alexander is leading Catholic (4)
- 11. Subsequently 27th US President wraps present for queen (10)
- 12. Roundabout way to return small children's bear from us (6)
- 14. Change to richer oratory (8)
- 15. Correctly hide result of generating energy from water (13)
- 17. Journalists from London paper love a coffee (8)
- 19. Sailor coat (6)
- 21. Dressing damsel in car crash (5, 5)
- 22. Assistant has bad habit (4)
- 23. Very serious to cut off East (6)
- 24. Decade of a number of fashionable accessories (8)

#### DOWN

- 1. Plead that I depart (6)
- 2. First I sail late evening to small landmass (4)
- Speechmaker right to leave Brazilian city for musical composition (8)
- 4. Star in field (6)
- 5. Place where people like to feel below par at (4, 6)
- 6. As cinema shows one who has forgotten (8)
- 8. One liners are a way to puzzle person from African country (6, 7)
- 13. Reserve Telegraph, say, for parliamentary programme (5, 5)
- 15. One who is entertaining gets older captives (8)
- 16. Raising small record of money dispersed at formal occasion (8)
- 18. Good man hides pain to get bag (6)
- 20. And dear in France to find engraver (6)
- 22. Nothing for medical worker to forbid (4)



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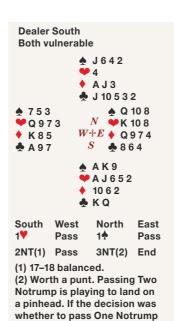
SOLUTION TO 4359 (Winner will be announced in three weeks' time) ACROSS: 1, Mushroom; 5, Re-echo; 9, Doorstep; 10, Strait; 12, America; 13, Amnesty; 14, Reallocation; 17, Postmistress; 22, Imagine; 23, Abandon; 24, Thirty; 25, Disposal; 26, Rating; 27, Ignorant. DOWN: 1, Medway; 2, Shower; 3, Respite; 4, Opera glasses; 6, Estonia; 7, Clanship; 8, Outlying; 11, Labour-saving; 15, Sprinter; 16, Escapist; 18, Moisten; 19, Shampoo; 20, Odessa; 21, Anklet.

Winner of 4357 is Patricia Cox, Halesowen, West Midlands

### Bridge Andrew Robson

M Y team seems to have an uncanny knack of winning the Gold Cup—by precariously small margins—yet losing in the early rounds of Crockfords (the other annual team-of-fours knockout). Our victors in 2014 Crockfords round four included 86-year Tony Eastgate: many congratulations to them.

Here are two deals from that fateful wet evening in New Malden. Our first gave West an interesting opening lead and follow-up problem.



or bid Three Notrump, passing would be reasonable. But when

the choice is between passing

Two Notrumps or going on to Three, the odds favour going

Three.

West's uninspiring collection suggested he would need to find partner at home in one or other minor. He therefore led the Ace of Clubs, so that he could (by retaining the lead) switch to Diamonds if a look at dummy suggested that. The Ace of Clubs won the first trick, declarer playing the Queen and a look at dummy told him that there was clearly no future in Clubs.

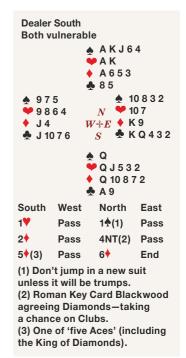
You could make a case for a Spade switch at trick two, but West correctly divined the need for a Diamond. But instead of leading a low Diamond (which declarer could run to his ten), he brilliantly switched to the King—necessary to remove dummy's Ace while the clubs were blocked. And that was the key move.

Declarer won dummy's Ace of Diamonds, crossed to the King of Clubs and tried a low Diamond to the Knave, hoping West held the Queen. East beat dummy's Knave with the Queen and led a third Diamond. Declarer won the ten and forlornly cashed the Ace-King of Spades, hoping the Queen would fall. When it did not, he cashed the Ace of Hearts and conceded down three.

Second hand plays low. Mostly.

Take our second Crockfords deal

—a slam.



West led the Knave of Clubs, declarer winning the Ace. Seeking to discard his other Club on a Spade, declarer cashed the Queen of Spades and had to cross to dummy to discard his Club on the Ace of Spades. The simple line is to cross to the Ace of Diamonds, cash the Spade, then lead up to the Queen of Diamonds. This was the successful line found at the other table.

Our declarer went a more psychological route, hoping to make the slam if East held a singleton nine of Diamonds. He crossed to a top Heart at trick three, cashed the top Spade, throwing the Club, then led a low Diamond from dummy.

If East had risen with the King of Diamonds, declarer would have had an easy ride. But the tough East played the nine—great play. Declarer played the ten, losing to East's Knave, but didn't think East was sharp enough to play the nine from King-nine doubleton, so, after ruffing West's Club return, he led and ran the Queen of Diamonds. Down one—oops!

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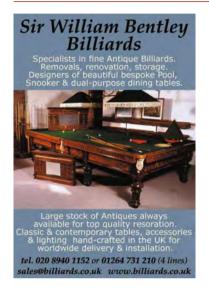
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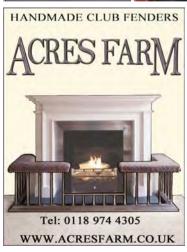
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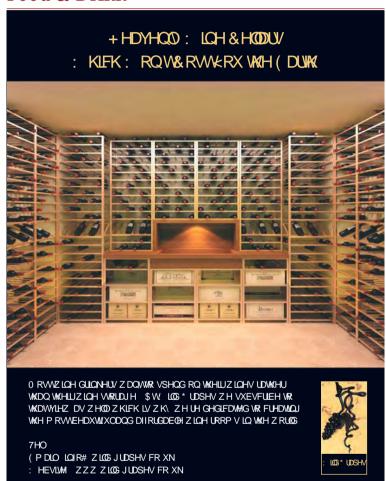
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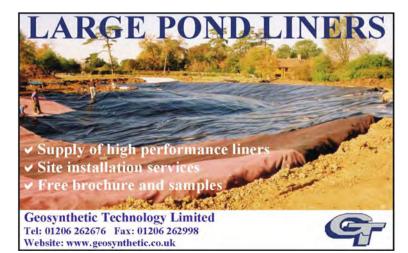
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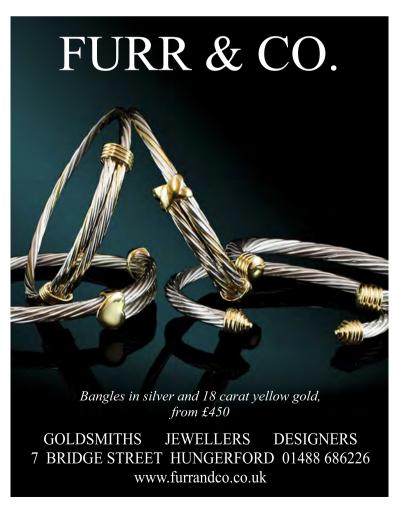
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### Top of the to do list: give up

'M sitting in bed with a cup of tea making a mental list: buy bathroom light and lampshades, get shower door fixed (again), order blinds, drill large hole in wall so that tumble dryer can be used. Ring Malcolm as I need to find gigantic ham boiling pan (in storage). And bed (also in storage). I'm interrupted by Will popping his head round the door: 'I've got a few things I need you to do today.' Oh? 'Register me with a doctor, buy a Do Not Bend envelope, ring the police. I've put my washing by the machine. I'm a Working Man. I've gotta go.' He feels it very keenly when he's dressed before me.

December means deadlines, so that 'hang pictures' nestles beside 'order turkey' on the To Do list. Everything you've been meaning to mend, source or find in the past six months needs to be done in the next two weeks. But this morning, it became clear that I also have the deadlines of the Working Man and these are possibly more pressing than mine.

The Working Man needs a doctor so that he can get jabs before leaving the UK in the first days

of 2015. He needs a criminal-record check so that he can work in the childcare centre in Brazil. He needs the Do Not Bend envelope for his exam certificates, which need to be stamped by his school, then sent to his university of choice. Now.

I ring the plumber and the electrician, but they explain that I'm joining a long queue behind other people's deadlines and they doubt they can get to me this year. 'Do you actually have the fitting?' they ask. 'Yes,' I lie. Next on the list is Malcolm, the man at the removal firm who has been our North Star, the rock of common sense around whom the chaotic eddies of our various house moves have swirled. He's the man who listened to our plans for getting sofas and chairs from house A to B to C and then said, very kindly: 'No offence, Mr and Mrs Baring, but most people would do all of that the other way round.'

I dial his number and can feel him hide under his desk while waving at the secretary to Not Put That Woman Through, but she does and I ask after his health because Malcolm doesn't sound himself at all. This, I learn, is due to an unfortunate incident with a plate-glass window resulting in several stitches. I explain about needing the ham pan and a bed, but Malcolm isn't making any promises.

6 No offence, but most people would do all of that the other way round 9

I review the other deadlines and pick up registration forms from the surgery. I return to the surgery with forms, via the bathroom-light shop, where I bump into a neighbour who is also buying a bathroom light. When I get back to the car, Fletcher, the dachshund, has hopped onto the passenger seat where he has sat, wetly, on the forms, which are now unreadable. I go back and get dry forms, fill these out and return them, whereupon I'm

told that the surgery no longer does 'gap year' jabs.

A friend arrives as I'm looking for a passport photo of Will for the criminal check. She sits on what I had thought was our only good chair, but falls through the seat of it. I bump 'get chairs mended' up the To Do list, then remember there are a couple in storage. Before I can ring Malcolm again, I'm elated to find a Do Not Bend envelope in the bottom drawer.

The Working Man returns and I wave the envelope at him, bristling with efficiency. 'It's too small,' he says. I suggest that I take his certificates to school for stamping tomorrow. 'No offence, Mum, but you don't seem to have a clue about my university application, so I think I'll take them myself after work.' Malcolm and Will seem to preface most remarks this way and am I offended? I am not. I'm utterly consoled.

I give up on my deadlines, but tick something off the list far more important than picture hanging: as soon as your child thinks you're incompetent, your job is done.

### TOTTERING-BY-GENTLY By Annie Tempest

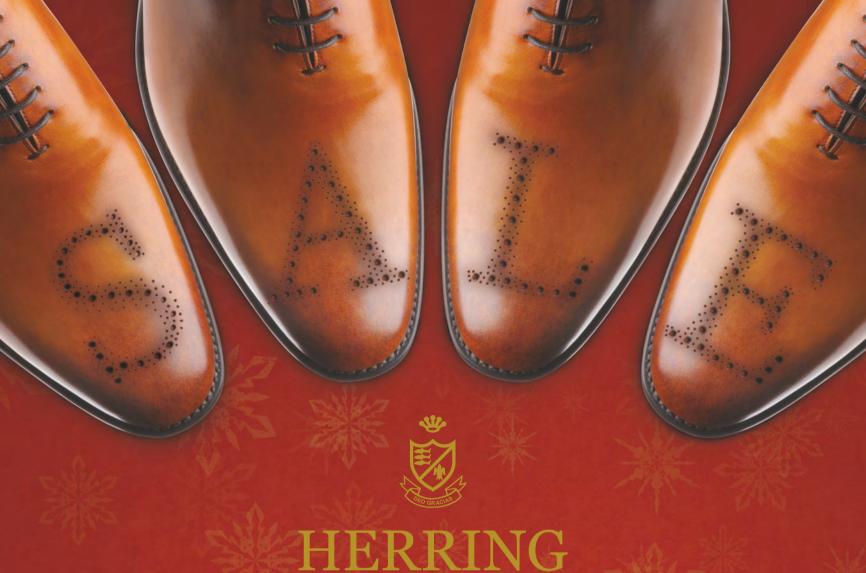
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